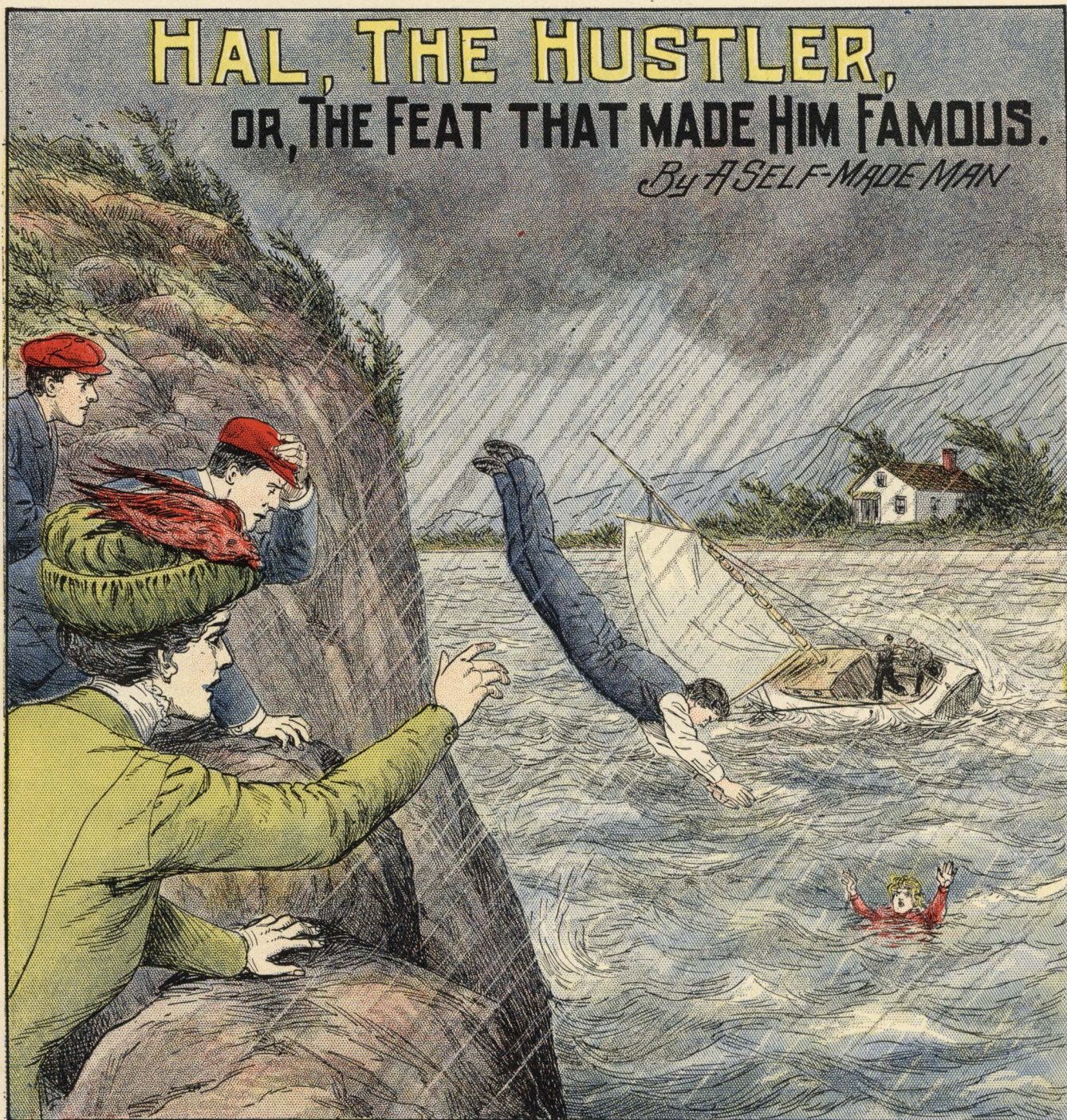


# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

## HAL, THE HUSTLER, OR, THE FEAT THAT MADE HIM FAMOUS.

*By A SELF-MADE MAN*



A puff of wind lurched the yacht. The girl fell into the lake. "I'll try to save her!" Hal yelled to his friends. Then he dove down from the cliff and disappeared in the water. It was a dangerous feat.



# Fame and Fortune Weekly

## STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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# HAL THE HUSTLER

OR,

## THE FEAT THAT MADE HIM FAMOUS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCES HAL THE HUSTLER.

"Gee! That's a big pile of seaweed you've hauled from the shore to-day, Hal," said Fred Ticknor. "Who's been helping you?"

"No one," replied Hal Harper, a good-looking, stalwart boy of eighteen, as he kept on emptying the farm cart of its load of seaweed, which was highly prized by the farmers in that vicinity as a fertilizer.

"Do you mean to say that you've done all that work yourself?"

"I have."

"By gracious! You're a hustler for fair."

"A fellow has got to hustle to get along in this world."

"I don't wonder they call you Hal the Hustler in the village. I always said you could do as much work as any two boys I know; but I'll bet there aren't any two boys around here who could get that pile of seaweed up here from the beach in the same time as you've done it all by yourself."

"Yes, they could, if they put their minds down to it. I haven't monkeyed away any of my time looking at the water, and wishing I was out on it, instead of driving the team to and fro and loading and unloading the weed. The storm of the day before yesterday landed an unusual amount of seaweed on the beach. I gathered it into piles yesterday afternoon, and made up my mind to get it all in to-day. Well, that is the last load."

"That shore line of yours is pretty valuable in some respects, ain't it?" said Fred.

"Yes, it's a good thing to have.

"By the way, Hal, do you know there's a revenue cutter at anchor in Coveport harbor?"

"No. I didn't hear anything about it. When did she come?"

"Early this afternoon. It's a wonder you didn't see her, for you were down on the beach off and on all day."

"I did notice a small, rakish-looking steamer coming up the coast about two o'clock, when I was loading up the cart on the beach, but I had no idea she was a revenue cutter. When I returned for another load she wasn't in sight."

"She must have put into the harbor while you were away from the shore."

"Well, there isn't anything extraordinary in a revenue cutter putting into Coveport. It isn't the first time such a thing has happened."

"No; but they say so much Canadian whisky and fine French cognac has been introduced into this State duty free that the Government is going to make a determined effort to stamp the business out."

"They've been trying to do that for some time, but haven't been very successful."

"My father said at the supper table to-night that it is now generally suspected that the smugglers have a rendezvous somewhere in this vicinity."

"It is possible they have," replied Hal, pitching out the last of the weed on the big heap near the barn.

Then he sprang out of the cart with his pitchfork in his hand.



"I should think the revenue officers would be able to find it out."

"You may gamble on it they've been trying to, but they haven't made a single arrest that I have heard of," replied Hal, starting to lead the horse and cart up to the door of the barn.

Fred followed.

"The liquor couldn't very well be landed and disposed of without the smugglers had accomplices somewhere along shore," he said.

"Of course. That's what they've got."

"They must be pretty slick individuals, then."

"They have to be slick to avoid discovery," answered Hal, proceeding to take the stout horse out of the shafts.

"I can't see how they manage to sell the stuff without being found out, especially as it's against the law to sell liquor in this State."

"I know you can't," laughed Hal, leading the horse into the barn. "If you could understand how it's done others could understand, too, and then the game would be up."

"But doesn't it stand to reason that somebody would be likely to give them away in order to get the reward the Government would pay after selling at auction the confiscated liquor?" said Fred, following Hal into the barn.

"There are evidently no traitors in the business," replied Hal, dumping a mess of oats in the animal's manger.

"Between the coast guard and the revenue men who have been watching the coast for weeks it would seem almost impossible for the smugglers to land their cargo."

"Oh, there are scores of creeks and coves, not speaking of the big estuaries, with their numerous islands, where a landing could be made on a dark night successfully, after the shore people in league with the smugglers had made sure that none of the revenue officers was around."

"But my father says that it is known for a fact that most of the smuggling is done in this neighborhood," said Fred.

"I have heard so, too; but I hardly thought it could be a fact, for it seems to me that it would show lack of strategy on the smugglers' part to confine their operations to any one locality," replied Hal, getting ready to close the barn for the night, "particularly when they have such an extensive line of shore to pick and choose from."

"They may have some special reason for keeping in this neighborhood," said Fred. "The fact that the cutter has anchored in the bay would show that the Government has its eye on this part of the shore."

"Wouldn't that show lack of strategy on the part of the Government?"

"How?"

"Why, the presence of the cutter here would cause the smugglers to lie low as long as she remained in the neighborhood, don't you think?"

"That's right. The idea never occurred to me," said Fred, following his companion to the house. "However, it would have one good effect."

"What's that?"

"It would put a stop to the smuggling."

"For the time being. It would probably begin again as soon as the cutter departed. What the Government ought to do is to keep the cutter at a distance from the suspected locality, and then send a number of officers here in dis-

guise to watch on the sly. As long as the shore accomplices are able to spot the revenue men, and keep track of their movements, the smugglers possess a big advantage. It is an easy matter for those in with the smugglers to keep the illicit traders informed by telegraph of the situation at any particular point, as long as the Government shows its hand," said Hal, filling a basin with water and proceeding to wash his face and hands, preparatory to going into the house for his supper.

It was now dark, although a starlit sky rendered large objects in the immediate vicinity dimly visible.

Hal was practically through for the day, though there were a few chores to be done after supper.

The farm, which was the property of his mother, consisted of about sixty acres of fairly good land, the management of which devolved on Hal, who was assisted by a hired hand named Jonas Kingsley.

Jonas was considered as one of the family, as he had worked on the place for many years, long before Hal's father died.

He was honest and faithful, and was, therefore, considered invaluable.

What he didn't know about farming was hardly worth considering.

He had instructed Hal in all the fine points of the business, so that the boy was fully capable of looking after his mother's interests.

Nevertheless, Hal's heart was not wrapped up in a bucolic life.

He had other ambitions which he stifled for the present for his mother's sake.

He longed for a wider sphere of action than that associated with a tiller of the soil.

There was really little money in farming in New England.

A living, with a little set aside each year for the future, was the best that the occupation afforded.

Hal subscribed for a number of high-class papers and magazines, and a close study of these kept him, to some extent, in touch with the busy world.

The boy dreamed of making his fortune some day in some line that had no connection whatever with farming.

He was ambitious to make his mark in life in a pronounced way, and he possessed all the qualities that lead to success.

He always worked with such a vim, and accomplished more than was expected of him, that he was regarded as the boss hustler of the county.

Every one who knew him spoke of him as Hal the hustler, and many predicted that some day he would become an important factor in the world.

"Come in, Fred, and watch me eat," said Hal, after he had finished his toilet. "If you hadn't already had your supper I would ask you to share mine."

Fred accompanied him into the big kitchen, which did duty as a general living-room, and said "good-evening" to Mrs. Harper, who was taking Hal's supper out of the oven and placing it on the table.

Hal's sister, Mary, was tidying up the room, and she and Fred exchanged greetings, apparently delighted to see each other.



In fact, Fred thought a whole lot of Mary, and the girl seemed to reciprocate the feeling.

Fred talked more with Mary than he did with Hal, and the subject of the smugglers was not renewed.

When Hal finished his supper Fred said he guessed it was time for him to go.

He lived in Coveport, which was about a mile away by the road.

His father was cashier of the village bank, and owned stock in it, consequently, the Ticknors were looked upon as persons of some importance in the place.

Fred attended the high school in the neighboring town of Solon, riding to and fro on horseback, and his parents expected to send him to Bowdoin College.

He was a nice, gentlemanly boy, and a warm friend of Hal's.

After the departure of Fred, Hal attended to sundry chores that had been left undone by Jonas Kingsley, who had gone to the village to call on a sick friend.

He noticed that the wind had changed around to the southeast, and that the heretofore bright sky was clouding over at a rapid rate.

"Looks as if another storm was brewing yonder," Hal said to himself, glancing toward the east and south. "That means another harvest of seaweed for us. Well, I can dispose of all that comes our way. I dare say I'll be able to spare Farmer Brown a few loads this spring. He's been after me for the last month about it, and I should like to oblige him."

He finished his work and entered the house, by which time the wind was moaning through the patch of woods that stood between the meadows and the shore, and bearing to the house the low cadence of the surf on the beach, half a mile distant.

Hal's room was on the second story at the back of the house, facing the ocean.

When he turned in the rain was beating against the window panes, and the prospect outside was as black as ink.

The wind had increased and was whistling around the eaves of the building.

"This is a night when a fire feels good," the boy said to himself, looking at the little round stove which heated his room, as he undressed. "I love the water, but I don't think I'd care to be out yonder to-night. The wind is blowing dead ashore, and that makes the coast a lee shore. The coast patrol will have a nice time of it on the beach. I don't envy them their job. They earn every dollar of their wages. Seems to me this would be a good night for the smugglers to land a cargo of liquor in some sheltered cove, where they could run a small sloop in and lie snug till the wind changed in the morning. If they could get rid of their stuff under cover of darkness and the gale they need not fear discovery when daylight came and showed them up. There's just such a cove on the north-east boundary line of our property. A skipper who knew the lay of the coast hereabouts as well as I do ought to be able to run a small fore-and-after in there in 'most any kind of weather."

Hal jumped into bed and cuddled down under the clothes with a feeling of great satisfaction.

"I must look at my rabbit traps first thing in the morn-

ing before I do anything else," he thought. "I ought to find several fat prizes awaiting me. If I like one dish more than another it is stewed rabbit."

Lulled to repose by the wind and rain, he soon fell asleep, and his last thoughts were about the rabbits that he hoped would be snared.

Hal was a sound sleeper, and rarely ever woke up before his usual hour for turning out in the morning.

Something, however, aroused him this night, and he sat up in bed and listened.

The wind was howling worse than ever, and the rain was pelting the glass.

"What in thunder was it awoke me?" he muttered sleepily.

He was about to lie down again when the sound of a cannon broke upon his ear.

The wind bore it in from the sea and flung it against the house.

The window sashes rattled loudly from the concussion.

"What in creation does that mean?" Hal asked himself in a puzzled voice.

It seemed a most extraordinary circumstance to the boy.

At that moment another report came booming over the water, shaking the window as before.

Hal jumped out of his bed and looked at the little clock.

The hour was half-past three.

He peered out of the window, but the darkness was so intense that his face was reflected in the ebony panes.

There were no further reports and he went to bed again, wondering what the meaning of it all was.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE STRANGER ON THE SHORE.

A gray sky with heavy rainclouds scudding across it greeted Hal's vision when he looked out of the window soon after daylight.

A gray mist hid the sea, and made the little woods look unreal and ghostly against the background of the dull sky.

A strong breeze drove the mist in wisps over the fields and brought the roar of the breakers with it.

The prospect was decidedly bleak and uncomfortable, and 'most any other boy would have returned to bed for another nap and left the rabbit traps till the day was fairer.

When Hal made up his mind to do anything he did it if it was possible of accomplishment.

Having decided to inspect his rabbit traps that morning, he was not to be deterred by the unpromising outlook of the weather.

The gale appeared to have blown itself out, and he believed it would soon clear up.

At any rate, he hurried into his clothes, putting on a thick pea jacket and donning a soft, wide-brimmed hat.

Going down to the kitchen, he opened up the draughts in the stove, shook it down and put on more coal.

Then he fetched a tin pail of water, did a few other things, and finally started for the woods.

The long grass in the fields was soaking wet, and what little he could see of the hillside, that rose at one point abruptly into the cliffs surrounding the little cove form-



ing the northeasterly boundary of the farm, seemed to steam in the cold light of the morning.

He found the first trap empty, and the second also.

The other eight, which he had set overnight, were all among the low sand hills along the shore.

As he tramped toward them, peering through the drizzling rain and mist, he suddenly came upon a man in the dim mysterious loneliness of dawn.

At first he seemed a dark blot in the sea fog, but as the drifting mist alternately revealed and obscured his burly figure, Hal felt it prudent to stop where he was until he had ascertained the identity of the man.

He appeared to be a stranger, and, therefore, could have no business on the shore at daybreak.

To the left it lay silent and deserted for miles, skirted by precipitous cliffs that extended eastward from the cove.

To the right it wound around a jutting point and widened into the bay of Coveport.

It was all of a two-mile walk to the village along the shore, while it was only a mile by road from the end of the lane.

No inhabitant of that locality would choose the beach route under such weather conditions when he could have taken the road.

One thing that aroused Hal's suspicions was that the man acted strangely.

He seemed afraid of something or somebody, for he glanced continually about him, and always in the direction of the village.

Hal dodged behind a rock close at hand and continued to watch the stranger, for such the boy was satisfied he was.

At the light grew a bit stronger Hal noticed that his clothes looked damp and sodden, as if he'd been in the water.

All at once he stooped and grasped something that lay in the sand at his feet.

As he hoisted it on his shoulder Hal saw it was an oblong box, of dark wood, clamped with brass at the corners.

With another look in the direction of Coveport, he strode noiselessly away toward the cove and the cliffs, vanishing in the mist.

"I wonder who the thunder that chap is?" Hal asked himself, as he looked in the direction taken by the man. "He certainly doesn't belong around here. What could have brought him to this lonesome stretch of beach, and why is he going toward the deserted cove instead of to the village?"

Those were questions the boy couldn't answer.

"He looks as if he'd come out of the sea not a great while ago," he mused. "Maybe some craft was wrecked on this beach in last night's gale and he belonged to her. That would account for his presence here, and also for his having that box in his possession. Probably it contains something of value belonging to him which he managed to save from the wreck. If that idea is correct he would seem to be the sole survivor. Assuming then that he is unacquainted with the shore would account for his going toward the cove instead of toward the harbor, since he probably took that course at random, not being aware that there was a village close by in the other direction."

Having summed the matter up to his own satisfaction,

Hal thought it was his duty to follow the stranger and direct him to Coveport.

At any rate his rabbit traps lay in that direction, so he wouldn't be going much, if anything, out of his way in rendering the man a service.

With that purpose in view he started toward the cove.

The mist was thinning out and it was brighter.

Three steps took him to the spot the stranger had just vacated, and Hal, who was blessed with an observing eye, saw something dark lying on the sand.

He stopped and picked it up.

It was a small pocketbook, flat and thin, damp with sea water.

"The man must have lost that," thought Hal. "I'll give it to him when I come up with him."

He dropped it into his pocket and proceeded.

Although Hal hustled in order to overtake the stranger he saw no sign of him.

"He must have left the shore and cut across the fields," thought the boy when he saw the cliffy entrance to the cove looming up ahead through the mist, "otherwise I ought to have overtaken him before this. Well, if he's done that he's bound to strike the road, and then if he keeps on eastward he'll see Caleb Caulder's farmhouse, and he can crave Caleb's hospitality. Well, I'll go as far as the rocks and if I don't meet him I'll turn back and look after my traps."

Hal went as close to the entrance of the cove as the high tide permitted.

The stranger was nowhere in sight.

"That settles it. Back I go," said Hal.

He returned along the sand hills and presently something jumped in the sand in front of him—something brown and furry, but all dragged and rubbed the wrong way.

He knelt on one knee, opened the jaws of the trap, dealt swiftly and mercifully with the poor little creature, and passed on to the next.

By the time he had visited all the traps, and had two rabbits to show for his early morning's exertions, it was broad daylight.

The rain had stopped altogether, the clouds were breaking up, the mist was almost gone, and he could see the shore quite distinctly as far as the point.

Almost on the western boundary line of his mother's property he made out a dark object that looked like the wreck of a small craft.

With the rabbits in his hand he started toward it, convinced now that his speculations concerning the stranger were correct.

As he approached he saw several men standing about it, and one outlined on top of the bows.

In a few minutes he was able to make them out clearer.

One of them wore the undress uniform of a naval officer in the American navy, while the others were attired alike as naval seamen.

Hal's approach was observed, and when he came up he was accosted by the officer.

"You're out early, young man," he said. "Been rabbiting, I see. Do you live near here?"

"Yes, sir. This wreck is on the edge of our farm, which extends eastward as far as the cove," replied Hal.



"I suppose you picked up those rabbits in yonder woods?"

"No, sir; I got them from the traps I set yesterday evening along the low sand hills at the back of the beach."

"How long have you been on the shore?"

"Nearly an hour, I should think."

"You haven't seen any one on the beach, have you?"

"Yes, sir. I saw one burly-looking man, evidently a stranger in this locality, on the beach when I first came down. He looked as if he had been in the water, and I came to the conclusion that some vessel had been wrecked in last night's gale and that he was, perhaps, the only survivor."

The officer looked interested at this bit of information.

"Which way was he heading?"

"For the cove; but he didn't go there, for the tide is too high for any one to make his way around the rocks, so I suppose he must have gone across the fields to the road."

"Thank you for the information, young man. It is what I wanted. Come, my men, follow me. Will you kindly show us how we can reach the road from here?"

"Certainly," replied Hal, as they started off.

"What is your name?" asked the officer.

"Hal Harper. Did the man come ashore from this wreck?"

"He did. We believe he is one of the smugglers we are after. His companions were probably lost when the sloop came ashore, since you say he was alone."

"One of the smugglers!" ejaculated Hal, in surprise. "Is that so? Then you belong to the revenue cutter that came into Coveport yesterday afternoon."

"I am one of her officers."

"And that firing I heard this morning about three o'clock—can you explain that?"

"I can. We received information that a smuggling vessel would be off this neighborhood last night, and after dark we steamed out, keeping off and on, on the lookout for her. We caught sight of a sloop in the vicinity of that island out yonder called the Chimney, and suspecting she was our game, chased her. We fired our heavy forward gun as a signal for her to heave to, but she paid no attention. Then we threw a shell across her bows. It had no effect. We fired several times after that, but owing to the heavy seas running and the mist we failed to hit her. She steered away from the Chimney and headed straight for the beach. We followed her in as near as we dared go, and saw her go ashore and break up partially. The surf looked too heavy for a boat to face, so we hauled off and returned to Coveport. I was then ordered to bring a boat's crew down by way of the beach. We arrived in time to see a man, similar in appearance to the one you have described to me, jump from the bows of the wreck on to the beach, with a small box on his shoulder, and disappear in the fog. We gave him chase, but failed to see him again."

"The man I saw had a small brown box with brass corner pieces," said Hal.

"I am satisfied he is the same man," replied the lieutenant. "He is doubtless aiming to reach the shelter afforded by the home of one of his friends in this vicinity. We must try and cut him off if we can."

Hal led the party by the shortest possible route to the road, and there bade the officer good-by as he and his men started eastward at a rapid pace.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A DISCOVERY.

Hal reached home much later than he intended, and found that his mother and sister had breakfast almost ready.

He hung the brace of rabbits on a nail outside the kitchen door.

"I didn't intend to be away so long, mother," he said, when he walked into the kitchen; "but I met with quite an adventure on the beach, and that detained me."

"Tell us about it," said his sister, her curiosity aroused.

"First of all tell me, did either of you hear any cannon shots early this morning in the direction of the ocean?" he said.

Neither of them had heard anything of the kind.

"Well, I was awakened by them, and at the time wondered what they meant. I know all about it now. The revenue cutter, which arrived at Coveport yesterday afternoon, discovered a sloop close to the Chimney early this morning, and failing to overhaul her chased her ashore. She lies a wreck on the western edge of our property. One of the presumed smugglers escaped, but the others are supposed to have lost their lives. I saw the chap to the eastward of the woods when I first reached the beach, and noted that he was a stranger in these parts. I didn't fancy his looks, what little I saw of them, and did not discover myself to him. He had a small brass-bound box with him, and after he had vanished in the mist I didn't see him again; but I'll warrant I'd know him if I ever saw him again."

Hal then described his meeting with the naval officer and his boat's crew, and how the former had told him about the attempt made by the cutter to capture the suspected smuggler.

"He was anxious to overtake the man I saw on the beach, so I guided him and his party to the road, where I left them a few minutes ago," concluded the boy.

By the time he had finished his story breakfast was ready, and the hired man was called in to take his usual place at the table.

During the meal Hal told him the story he had already related to his mother and sister.

"Smugglers, eh?" said Kingsley. "There's been a lot of talk about them of late. People say they've landed a number of cargoes of brandy and other liquors in this neighborhood within the last six months, but I doubt it. They may have landed one, perhaps two, but I guess that's the sum total of their enterprise. I don't see how they could have done much, for I know there have been several revenue men here for some weeks on the watch, and it would have been next to impossible for them to run a cargo on the coast hereabouts without discovery. You can see yourself how sharp the Government people are when they nailed that sloop, according to your account, this morning, and it was a fine night for the smugglers. You can take my word for it, Hal, that this smuggling business is greatly exaggerated."

The news of the running ashore of the alleged smuggler by the cutter was soon known to nearly every in-



habitant of Coveport, and, of course, that was the main topic discussed in the village that morning.

Naturally, Fred Ticknor heard about it, and seized upon it as a good excuse to come over to the Harper farm as soon as he returned from Solon that afternoon.

Of course, he judged that by that time his friend knew as much or more on the subject than he could tell him, but the opportunity to see Mary Harper so soon again was not to be neglected.

He was not aware of the part Hal had played in connection with the matter, and was surprised when he heard his friend's story.

"So you actually met one of the smugglers?" he said, in a tone of some eagerness.

"I ran across the sole survivor of the sloop that the cutter chased ashore," replied Hal. "Whether he's a smuggler, and the sloop was engaged in that business isn't established to my knowledge beyond a reasonable doubt. If the sloop really was a smuggler it seems to me all evidence against her has been swallowed up by the sea. As for the man I saw on the shore, if he has been, or should be, captured, it will be up to the Government to produce evidence against him before he can be punished as a smuggler."

"But the lieutenant in command of the cutter received word that a fast sloop called the *La Reine des Mers* left a certain Canadian port yesterday morning with a cargo of brandy and whisky aboard, and that, though she had cleared for Boston, she really intended to land the liquor somewhere along the coast of this State near Chimney Island last night if conditions were favorable. Well, a craft answering her description was discovered off the Chimney, as you know, and refused to lay to when signaled to do so. That, of itself, is suspicious enough to stamp her character in my mind. Well, she went ashore and one man escaped from her. His connection with the chased sloop ought to be enough to show that he's one of the smugglers," said Fred, nodding his head in a way that intimated he didn't think there could be any doubt on the subject.

"All right, let it go at that. There is no use of our continuing the argument until we hear something more about the matter from an authoritative source. Go in now and talk to sis. I've got a job to do," replied Hal, turning away and walking over to the barn.

On the following morning the cutter left Coveport and sailed back the way she had come, and it was known that her commanding officer had not captured the man Hal saw on the shore.

As the Government sleuths, who had been hanging around the neighborhood for some time, were seen to take a westbound train at Solon over the Washington County Railroad, it was judged that the revenue officials believed that the destruction of the sloop marked the end of the liquor smuggling, for the present at least.

The loss of the sloop and the escape of the sole survivor interested the inhabitants of Coveport and vicinity for at least a week, and then they began to talk about other things.

Even Fred Ticknor, who had been much worked up on the subject, ceased to refer to it any more, and adopted some other excuse to call at the Harper farm.

Hal was about the only one who still thought about the smuggling incident.

For several days after that eventful morning he haunted the beach around flood tide.

He was looking for evidence to establish the sloop as a smuggler.

She was alleged to have been loaded with both barrels and cases of liquor.

The barrels were understood to contain whisky, and the cases bottles of imported French cognac.

In his opinion one or more of the barrels ought to come ashore through the action of the waves, and perhaps some of the bottles, as many of the cases would have been broken through the wreck.

While these things could not be expected to float near the surface, still it was by no means unreasonable to expect them to be rolled up by the tide.

The only things that did come ashore were pieces of the wreck.

One afternoon Hal found her stern board on the beach, and on this he traced her name in faded white letters, *La Reine des Mers*—which is French for Queen of the Seas, a rather high-sounding title for so small a craft.

Next morning a life-buoy, with the same name painted in small black letters on it, came ashore while Hal was on the spot.

Not the ghost of a barrel or a bottle, even an empty broken one, showed up.

Nothing but plain wreckage in the shape of planks and cordage, and Hal laid claim to and carted them all away on the ground that they landed on his mother's property, which gave her a legal right to take possession of the flotsam.

No one disputed his claim, so he hung the life-buoy in the barn, where it became an object of interest to chance visitors, and used the stern board to repair the roof of the chicken house.

Strange to say, Hal had forgotten all about the thin brown pocketbook which lay neglected in the pocket of his pea jacket.

He hadn't used the jacket since the morning he went after the rabbits and discovered the man on the shore.

The succeeding mornings were fine and clear, and Hal wore a lighter jacket.

He only wore the pea jacket in bad weather, and sometimes when he went fishing.

On the Saturday afternoon following the wreck of the *La Reine des Mers*, Fred rode over to the Harper farm and found Hal preparing to go out to the vicinity of Chimney Island to fish.

Hal frequently took Saturday afternoon off in this manner, as a kind of recreation that he was fond of indulging in, and Fred invariably accompanied him as a companion and general assistant, for Ticknor liked salt water almost as well as Hal himself.

After putting his mare in the barn and passing a word or two with Mary Harper, Fred joined his friend, and helped him take a number of things down to the staunch, weather-beaten catboat belonging to Hal, which was anchored in a small sheltered creek near where the wreck had gone ashore.



The afternoon was cloudy and the wind blew strong off-shore.

The ocean was alive with white caps, but not what a sailor would call rough.

It was really an ideal day for an experienced fisherman to pick up a load of the finny tribe on the ground they haunted, and Hal had the business down as fine as any one who made it their occupation.

Later on, when the mackerel got that far east, by which time they would be in fine condition, Hal went out nearly every day and caught a big load, for they swarmed about Chimney Island, and sold them in Solon at a big profit, sometimes getting as much as a quarter apiece for the best of them at wholesale.

Whatever attraction Chimney Island had for fish, certain it is whenever there were any in that water they could be found around the island if nowhere else.

At present fish were scarce in that neighborhood, but Hal never failed to catch a good mess for the house, and for Fred to take home with him.

It didn't take long for the boys to get afloat, and with a single reef in the mainsail the boat was soon heading for the island, which lay about five miles off shore, and was remarkable for nothing but the tall white shaft of rock, resembling a factory chimney, from which it took its name.

The waters immediately around the island, extending to perhaps half a mile in a circle, were known to be exceedingly perilous for a navigator to venture into even in a small craft with as light a draught as a catboat.

There were shoals and sunken rocks everywhere, forming the submerged part of the island itself, which would have had an extensive area had all of it been above the surface.

There were channels all through the dangerous ground, but fishermen and others who had attempted to follow them in an effort to land on the island, found they led nowhere, like cul de sacs, and not infrequently came to grief in their efforts to extricate themselves after they once got within their influence.

Hal was well acquainted with the dangers of the locality, and never ventured nearer than a quarter of a mile of the island at the most, and usually kept further out.

Once he took chances after a shoal of mackerel that fled toward the Chimney, and nearly lost his boat and his life as well.

He never forgot the narrow shave he experienced, and ever after let the mackerel go rather than take desperate chances again.

On this particular afternoon, Hal anchored the boat on the edge of the outer shoals, and he and Fred threw out their lines.

During the first hour they had few bites, and four small fish were the sum total they landed during that time.

"This is tiresome," remarked Fred at length. "What is the matter with the fish to-day? It is just the kind of afternoon they ought to bite."

"Maybe we're in a bad spot," replied Hal. "We'll pull up the anchor and go further to the east."

This they did, but with no better results.

During the second hour they altered their position three

times, and they succeeded in capturing only one more fish, though he was a big fellow.

"I'll bet they're all in near the island," growled Fred.

"That shows remarkable intelligence on their part, for they're out of danger there—no one can get at them," laughed Fred.

"It's a shame we can't go closer in."

"We can, but as the tide is low it would be risky to attempt it."

"I'd like to make a landing on that island."

"Oh, there's nothing to see."

"There's the chimney and the twins."

"You can see them from here."

"I'd like to get a close view of them."

"People, like children and cats, always yearn for what is just out of their reach."

"Thanks. Do you compare me to a child or a cat?"

"Present company always excepted. By the way, if you want to get a closer view of the chimney and the twins get my glass out of the cabin and take a peep at them."

"Have you got a glass aboard?" asked Fred, eagerly. "Since when did you get it?"

"I bought it the last time I was at the village."

Fred got the telescope and focussed the chimney with it, and then the two rocks on the edge of the island called the twins.

"This is a fine glass. You can see bang-up with it. It brings things out as clear as crystal. There are three men on the island."

"What!" cried Hal. "Let me see."

He took the glass and looked.

"By George! So there are. I wonder how they got there? Must have rowed out in a skiff, and that's a pretty big row."

"I should say it was. It's all of five miles. I'd rather walk that than row it any day."

Hal continued to inspect the island.

Suddenly he saw a large sailboat shoot out apparently through a wall of rock and head to the southward.

"Look, Fred, look!" he exclaimed. "There's a good-sized sailboat coming directly from the island."

"I see her, and yet everybody says that nothing larger than a rowboat can reach the island. You've said so yourself a dozen times."

"I know I have. A score of fishermen have tried it from every point of the compass and failed. So have I tried it after a fashion. There, she's tacking to the east. Those chaps—I see two men on board—have evidently discovered a channel somehow or they couldn't have reached the island."

"She has tacked again," said Fred.

"A short one, for there she goes to the eastward once more. Now she's tacked to the southeast."

That brought the strange boat within an eighth of a mile of the spot where they were anchored.

As she came around in a semi-circle and headed to the east and north, Hal raised the glass to his eyes again.

He caught a clear view of the men in the boat.

One was a smooth-faced young man while the other was square-built, with a mustache and imperial.



Hal uttered an exclamation of surprise as his gaze rested on the burly one.

He was the dead image of the stranger he had encountered on the shore the morning that the *La Reine des Mers* was chased ashore by the revenue cutter.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### HAL HAS SOME IDEAS.

"What's the matter, Hal?" asked Fred.

"Nothing much," replied Hal evasively, "only I think I have seen one of the chaps in that boat before."

"If you know him you could ask him to give you the bearings of the channel, so we could go to the island ourselves."

"I don't know him. I said I thought I had seen him before."

"At any rate, you know in a general way where the channel is—I mean the direction from the island."

"I doubt if that would help any. I took note of the way in which the boat tacked about, and that showed me that one must know its course well in order to follow it."

"Well, that boat has established the fact that there is a channel that leads direct to the island."

"There's no doubt about that. Come now, the sun is getting low; we must try and get a couple of messes of fish or we shall have come out here for nothing," replied Hal, turning his attention to his line once more.

He pulled it in and found a couple of fish securely hooked.

"That isn't so bad," he said, as he started to take them off the line.

Fred pulled his line in and found one fish on the last hook.

"By the way, Hal," he said after a little while. "I saw three men on the island, and only two of them sailed away from it."

"How do you know that? The other man might have been in the cabin," replied Hal.

"That's so. I didn't think of that."

"You want to learn to think if you expect to get on in this world."

"That's right. Say, what do you suppose brought those men to the Chimney?"

"How can I answer that question? I'm not a mind reader. They may have gone there to test the channel."

"I hope they'll publish their knowledge for the benefit of others."

"They may, and again they may not," replied Hal, who couldn't help thinking about the man he had recognized in the boat.

There was little doubt in his mind that he was the survivor of the wreck of the *La Reine des Mers*, and the stranger he had met on the shore.

If he really was a smuggler then his presence at the Chimney might mean a whole lot.

He remembered that the revenue officer had said that the cutter discovered the sloop in the neighborhood of the island.

If this alleged smuggler was able to find his way to the island on a sailboat might not the channel be deep and wide enough to accommodate a large sloop as well?

In that event, perhaps the smugglers had used the island as a sort of storage house for their cargoes, subsequently landing their stuff on the main shore in sections through the agency of a fishing boat, the owner of which stood in with them.

That would, in a manner, account for the degree of success they had been credited with, since a small fishing boat that went out of Coveport in the morning and returned with some fish at night could hardly be suspected of having any connection with an extensive smuggling trade.

The more Hal thought the subject over the more the idea, as outlined above, took possession of his mind.

He was a boy, however, who never went off half-cocked, as the expression is.

In other words, he did not intend to go around and tell what he couldn't show had some basis on fact.

If the Chimney had been, or still was, used as a cloak for smuggling liquor into the State he wanted to be able to prove it before he said anything about it.

The only way he could satisfy himself on the matter was to reach the island and investigate it.

There was only one way within his power, and that was to go there in a rowboat.

That was an undertaking that presented many difficulties.

To begin with, it was a ten-mile round trip.

In the next place, it might prove a dangerous enterprise, inasmuch that if the island proved to be a smugglers' nest he would be apt to find one or more of the rascals on watch there, and if he was discovered on the island he might be handled without gloves in a way that might not be good for his health.

The fact that not a barrel or bottle had been washed up on the beach after the wreck of the *La Reine des Mers*, which had been reported as having cleared from her Canadian port with a cargo of liquor, made Hal suspect that she had landed her freight somewhere before she was sighted by the revenue cutter, and as she was seen close to the Chimney, was it not possible that she had left the liquor on that island?

Her attempt at escape could not, in that case, be ascribed to the presence on board of her cargo, but to its absence, for her papers would have shown that she had cleared for Boston with a freight of liquor, and it would have been up to her captain to explain what had become of it en route.

All these points occurred to Hal as he fished away alongside of his companion, replying to his talk in an absent kind of way that showed he was in a preoccupied mood.

At length Fred noticed his manner.

"Say, what the dickens are you dreaming about?" he asked.

"Oh, I was just thinking," replied Hal.

"About that channel?"

"Not exactly."

"What do you mean by not exactly?"

"I was thinking about the island."

"What about it?"

"I was wondering if it was really worth the trouble of visiting in case one did find out the lay of the channel."

"Why not? It would be a feather in any one's cap to



say he had sailed a boat straight there and back. It would be a feat that would make you famous in Coveport and vicinity."

"That wouldn't amount to a whole lot. I'd like to perform a feat that would make me really famous, so that my name would appear in all the papers as a boy who had accomplished something worth while."

"That would be fine. It would make your fortune; but the chances of such a thing happening to you are rather slim. You would have to do something of great importance—like the discovery of the North Pole, for instance. That would make you famous all over the world."

"Oh, one can get famous without going to such an extreme as that."

"That's so. A certain woman got famous some time ago by merely going on a rampage with an ax in the cause of temperance. Now, that's a very simple thing by which to acquire fame."

"Do you call that fame? I call it notoriety."

"Well, she became famous in a way. She was talked about all over the country and even in Europe."

"I'm not looking for that kind of fame. I would like to do something that would really be a credit to me and at the same time of sufficient importance to attract general attention."

"If you were a young doctor and discovered a real cure for cancer or consumption that would be a credit to you and attract general attention to you—in fact, you'd become famous beyond a doubt as a benefactor of humanity."

"I'm not a young doctor, so what's the use of thinking of that?"

"No use. Hello, I've got another bite," and Fred hauled in a fine fish.

"It's nearly sunset now, so we'll pull up the anchor and make for the shore," said Hal. "We've caught enough to supply both our tables with some to spare."

"I guess we have, and I'm tired of the sport, anyway," said Fred, winding up his line, an example followed by Hal.

In less than ten minutes they had the anchor aboard, the mainsail hoisted, and were headed for the beach whence they had come.

## CHAPTER V.

### HAL'S DANGEROUS FEAT.

Spring was now well along, and there was plenty of work for Hal to look after on the farm.

He and the hired man hustled from early morning till after dark.

"Farming is little better than slavery," Hal told Fred one evening, when the latter had ridden over to the Harper farm after his supper. "You've got to work like a nigger, and what do you get out of it? Mighty little in proportion to the amount of energy you put into it."

"You're not the first one who has told me that," replied Fred; "but owing to your hustling tactics, and good management, I have heard people say that you are getting better results out of this farm, considering its size, than any other farmer in the county."

"I'm getting all I can out of it," answered Hal. "I've

got things down to a regular system. Everything runs along like clockwork. You see one reason why mother is getting better results is because our land is in better shape than most of the other farms. I keep it well fertilized with seaweed, and that goes a long way toward making the crops grow quick and turn out good. I keep our fences and walls in first-class repair, and that makes the farm look neat and ship-shape. Several of my neighbors neglect those things, and their property presents a slipshod appearance, as you may have noticed."

"Of course I've noticed it. I'll bet if your mother wanted to sell the farm it would fetch a higher price per acre than any other farming property around here," said Fred.

"It certainly would. It's a model farm, if I do say so."

"And Hustling Hal has made it what it is," laughed Fred.

"Thanks for the compliment. I believe that what's worth doing at all is worth doing well," replied Hal.

"I believe you said you didn't intend to follow farming any longer than you could help," said Fred.

"I don't. There's nothing in it—for me."

"What line of business do you think of tackling for your life work?"

"I haven't decided as yet; but it will be something that promises to pan out good money."

"I'll wager you'll make it pan out, if hustling will do it."

"Every man, they say, is the architect of his own fortune."

"There are a lot of mighty poor architects, then, for the majority of men never make a fortune."

"What do you expect to do when you quit school—enter the village bank as a clerk with the ultimate intention of stepping into your father's shoes?"

"My ambition is to become a big lawyer."

"A big lawyer is good, for they make most of the money. The woods are full, I've heard, of ordinary lawyers, who have to scratch for a living. Well, are you coming in to see Mary? I'm going to supper."

During the whole of the foregoing conversation Hal had been working away in the barn, repairing a plow, and now he had finished the job.

He was not a boy to stand around and chin as long as there was anything to do, and one can always find something to do on a farm.

Fred was accustomed to following him around from place to place in order to keep up a conversation with him, for Hal would go right ahead with whatever work he had in hand without reference to the presence of his friend.

"To-morrow is Saturday," said Fred, as Hal sat down to the supper table. "What is on the program? I mean for the afternoon?"

"I'm going over to Lake Placid on business. Sis is coming with me, and you may come, too, if you're very good," replied Hal.

"I'm on," grinned Fred.

He was always on where Mary Harper was concerned.

"Then get here not later than two. I'm going to drive over in the light wagon. As there isn't room for three on the front seat I'll put in another for you and sis."



Fred was on hand next day at the hour mentioned, and the party of three started for Lake Placid.

This was a popular summer resort on a small scale.

Many people of means from the more important cities of the State owned or rented cottages on the lake shore, and it presented a very gay appearance during the season.

There were two hotels at the lake.

Hal had learned that their managers were down there now, getting things into shape for business, and he wanted to make a contract with each of them to supply them with mackerel when the fish got in the market.

During the previous summer he had sold the mackerel he caught to the Coveport dealer who supplied the hotels and cottagers.

The dealer had gone out of the business, so Hal determined to sell direct this year and make an extra profit, out of which he would pay a boy to deliver the fish.

The afternoon was fairly pleasant when Hal, Fred and Mary Harper left the farm in the light wagon, now provided with two seats.

A couple of hours' drive carried them to the lake, by which time the sky had clouded up.

It took Hal about half an hour to transact his business, and he got the two contracts he was after.

Then he went to the village dealer who supplied the cottagers, and made an arrangement with him.

All but one of the cottages was closed up tight, as the season was still more than a month away.

The solitary cottage that was open was occupied by a Portland banker, who had come early on account of his health, and his family, consisting of his wife, a son and a seventeen-year-old daughter.

The road that Hal and his companions had come by led for some distance along the top of a series of cliffs that rose straight out of the waters of the lake.

When they started back by the same route it came on to rain, and so Hal reined in at one of the closed cottages built on the top of the cliffs, and the young people took refuge under the shelter of the piazza overlooking the water.

Lake Placid was far from being a placid lake that afternoon.

A stiff breeze that had almost the weight of a small gale, roughened its surface into waves of no small size.

Skimming along the turbulent surface, like a frightened sea bird, our three young people noticed a trim-built sloop-yacht about twenty feet long.

She was sailing close in to the cliffs, and our friends ran out to the edge of the rocks to watch her.

A well-dressed boy, of about sixteen years, was directing the boat's course, while beside him sat a girl somewhat older.

"They're pretty nervy young people to go out on the lake in this blow," said Fred, as the three watched the boat and her occupants with some curiosity.

"Dear me, it makes me nervous to look at them," said Mary Harper. "See how far the boat heels over. I would be frightened out of my life if I was in that young lady's place."

"They ought to have at least two reefs taken in their mainsail," said Hal. "That young fellow is taking grave

chances with so much canvas spread. Great Scott! She's over and the girl's in the water."

A puff of wind lurched the yacht.

The girl fell into the lake.

"I'll try to save her!" Hal yelled to his friends.

Then he dove down from the cliff and disappeared in the water.

It was a dangerous feat.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HAL SAVES THE BANKER'S DAUGHTER.

Hal struck the water and disappeared.

A moment or two later he appeared on the agitated surface of the lake and struck out for the imperiled girl who was on the point of sinking a second time.

She went under before he got within reaching distance of her, but he kept on, expecting to see her head come up at any moment.

Fred, Mary and a boy from the village gazed down upon him from the top of the cliff.

The two former had little fear for Hal's safety, as they knew he was well able to look out for himself, even encumbered as he was with his clothes, for he was an expert swimmer.

Their anxiety, therefore, was centered on the fate of the girl.

She seemed so long in coming to the surface the second time that they began to fear she had perished.

"There she is at last, and Hal has her," cried Fred.

"Yes, yes; how thankful I am. My brother will save her now," said Mary. "See, he is heading for the boat, which has come about and is shooting toward them. That boy knows how to handle her pretty well, or she would have been capsized before this. It was the unexpected flaw that careened her over that time and threw the girl into the water."

As the yacht came up the boy skilfully threw her up into the wind, reached over and seized Hal's extended hand.

When the boat lost headway he grabbed the girl, and, with Hal's assistance, drew her into the boat.

She was quite unconscious, and the boy viewed her with evident anxiety.

Then he helped Hal aboard.

"I am very grateful to you for saving my sister," said the young yachtsman, grasping Hal's hand and shaking it. "I never could have reached her in time, or been able to have got her aboard if I had. What is your name, and do you live in the village?"

"My name is Hal Harper, and I do not live in the village. I come from a farm near Coveport, about nine miles from here. You'd better take your sister into the cabin and look after her. I'll attend to your boat, and will land you wherever you direct me to."

"Very well," said the boy. "Take the yacht down to that private wharf yonder. We live in that large cottage just above it."

Hal nodded and took the tiller, while the boy picked up his unconscious sister and carried her into the little cabin.

As Hal headed for the wharf the yacht heeled far over under the heavy press of sail she was carrying.



He could not leave the helm to go and take a reef or two in it; besides, he only had a short run to make, and under his expert guidance the display of canvas didn't make much difference any way.

As the boat approached the landing stage Hal took a turn or two around the tiller with a sheet so as to hold it long enough to enable him to let the mainsail down with a run.

When the yacht shot up to the little wharf he went forward, let down the jib and sprang ashore, with the forward mooring rope in his hand, and quickly made it fast to an iron ring in the dock.

Returning aboard he got the other rope and made that fast to the second ring.

Then he dropped a couple of rope fenders over the yacht's side to prevent her bumping against the spiles and rubbing off her paint.

He gathered the loose mainsail into place, but made no attempt to furl it properly, leaving that job for the young yachtsman to attend to later on.

At that moment a man, who appeared to be a gardener and general assistant on the place, came running down to the wharf.

"Hello!" he cried, noticing that Hal was a stranger. "Where is Master Marshall and Miss Kittie?"

"In the cabin," replied Hal, guessing that he referred to the young yachtsman and his sister.

"Are you a friend of Master Marshall's? Why, you're all dripping. Have you been overboard?"

"I look like it, don't I?" smiled Hal.

"You do, for a fact. Fell out of the boat, I s'pose, somehow?"

"No; Miss Marshall fell overboard and I jumped in from yonder cliff and saved her. That's why she's in the cabin with her brother."

"Is it possible!" cried the man. "How did it happen?"

"Young Marshall, as you call him, was carrying too much sail in this wind, though he appears to be a fairly skilful boatman. A sudden flaw heeled the yacht far over to the leeward and spilled the young lady into the lake. She had a narrow escape for her life."

As Hal spoke the young yachtsman poked his head out at the door.

"That you, William?" he said. "My sister has been overboard. Run up to the house and tell the maid what has happened, and to be ready to attend to her, for I'm going to carry her right up."

"Yes, sir," replied the man respectfully, starting off to obey orders.

"I guess you'd better let me carry your sister, as we're both wet. How is she now? Has she come around?" said Hal.

"Yes, and she is very grateful to you for saving her life. I haven't introduced myself to you. My name is Frank Marshall. My father is a Portland banker, and in poor health. That accounts for us being here so early in the year, as the doctor ordered him to come here for the air. When you get up to the house I'll lend you clothes to take the place of your damp ones, and you will, of course, remain with us until your own apparel has been dried and pressed out."

"My sister and a chum of mine are up at that cottage

yonder on the top of the cliff, with the team we came here in. I must send them word to go to the village inn and wait there for me," said Hal.

"I will send William at once to give them any directions you want to forward," replied Frank Marshall. "Now, if you will carry my sister to the house I shall be ever so much obliged to you."

Hal followed Frank into the cabin, which was fitted up in an expensive way, with white and gold paneling, on which were numerous small water color sketches.

Miss Marshall was lying on one of the lockers, with her head propped up by a sofa pillow.

She looked pale and weak, but quite interesting even in her bedraggled state, for she was a mighty pretty blonde, with blue eyes, and a face that was perfect in every outline.

"Here is Hal Harper, sister," said her brother. "He's going to carry you up to the house, as I guess he's better able to do it than I."

Miss Marshall smiled feebly and extended her hand to Hal.

"I thank you for what you have done for me," she said, in a grateful tone. "I realize that I owe my life to you, and so does my brother. We shall never forget the obligation you have placed us under, and our parents will be just as grateful to you as we are."

"You are welcome, Miss Marshall. I assure you I am very happy to have been able to do you a service."

"My brother said that you leaped to my rescue from the top of the cliffs. It was very daring on your part to do that, and shows how brave and gallant you are. I am sure very few boys would have taken such a risk for another's sake."

"Well, I saw that something had to be done at once or you would drown. Your brother had his hands full managing the boat, and could not give you his attention soon enough to be of service to you. There was no way for me to run down to the shore, so I made the plunge, and don't feel any the worse for it," replied Hal.

"Well, you must change your wet garments as soon as you reach the house. My brother will take you to his room and let you have some of his clothes to wear till your own are dried," said the girl.

"I have arranged all that, Kittie," said her brother.

"Well, Miss Marshall, if you are ready I will carry you to the house," said Hal.

"If you carry me on to the wharf I think, with your help and brother's, I'll be able to walk to the house," she replied.

"All right," answered Hal, who then lifted her in his arms and carried her on to the wharf.

She was not so weak as she had thought, and they had little difficulty in getting her to the house, where she was taken in charge by her maid.

Her mother and father were in the library, and had not been told anything about the accident which had happened to her.

Frank rushed Hal to his room, and there the latter wrote a note to Fred Ticknor, which Frank got the gardener to deliver right away.

Then the banker's son furnished Hal with dry clothes,



and took his wet apparel downstairs to the laundry, where he gave orders that they be dried and pressed.

While Hal was dressing Frank excused himself and hunted up his mother and father, to whom he related the thrilling incident his sister had been through.

They were surprised and very much concerned at the story.

Mrs. Marshall at once went to her daughter's room, while the banker asked his son for all the details.

"Who is this young man who saved Kittie's life?" asked Mr. Marshall.

"His name is Hal Harper, and he lives on a farm near Coveport, about nine miles from here. He's a smart fellow, for he swims like a duck, and can manage a sailboat maybe better than I can. As to his pluck, he showed the stuff he's made of by diving from the top of the cliff the moment Kittie went overboard. She must have been drowned but for his promptness. He's a fine fellow, and we are under great obligations to him," said Frank.

"He shall be suitably rewarded for his gallant action. Is he in the house?" asked the banker.

"Yes. He's in my room changing his wet clothes for dry apparel I have loaned him."

"Bring him here when he has dressed himself."

"I will, father," replied Frank, leaving the room.

Fifteen minutes later Hal was piloted to the library by Frank and introduced to the banker.

His frank, open countenance and manly appearance made a favorable impression on Mr. Marshall, who saw right away that he was no common boy.

The banker proceeded to thank Hal for the priceless service he had just rendered his daughter, and assured him that the obligation was one he never could forget.

"I didn't do any more than my plain duty, sir," replied Hal.

"But my son tells me that you dived from the summit of the cliffs into the lake. That was a very risky feat for you to undertake, even to save another's life. It shows that you are a boy of nerve. At any rate, my daughter would probably have been drowned but for your plucky conduct. It will give me great pleasure to make you some substantial acknowledgement in return for the service you have rendered my daughter," said the banker.

"If you mean by that that you think of paying me for what I did, I must respectfully refuse to accept anything from you. You have thanked me. So has the young lady herself, as well as your son. That is all that is necessary," replied Hal, with some dignity in his tone and manner.

"But, my dear young man, I should not feel satisfied unless I tendered you some recognition for the——"

"It isn't necessary, Mr. Marshall. I have been thanked, and that is all I feel I am entitled to, or can accept."

Hal spoke in a firm tone, and the banker saw that it was useless for him to press the matter further.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE THREE RED LIGHTS.

In a short time Mrs. Marshall and her daughter entered the room, the young lady presenting a decidedly improved appearance in a pretty gown, with her hair brushed and

fixed up, after having been dried before the hot laundry fire.

Of course, the lady of the house had to thank Hal, too, and assure him how very grateful she was to him.

Frank soon after took Hal to his room to show him his books and sporting outfit, and to have a talk with a view to their better acquaintance.

The gardener came up to report that he had found Hal's sister and friend on the veranda of the cliff cottage, wondering when he would rejoin them, and he had delivered the note.

They said that they would drive to the village inn and remain there until Hal came to take them home.

Hal knew they would be perfectly contented in each other's company, so he did not bother any more about them.

The weather had cleared up by this time, but it was getting close on to sundown, and so Hal told Frank that if his clothes were in shape to put on, even if not thoroughly dry, he would like to get into them and make a start.

"Oh, we're not going to let you go before supper, Hal," said Frank in a friendly and familiar way. "Your sister and your friend will be well taken care of at the inn. At any rate, I intend to send William there to let them know that you will not rejoin them for at least an hour yet, and that they are to dine at the inn as our guests."

Frank would not listen to any refusal on Hal's part, so our hero yielded to his wishes, which he declared were his parents' as well.

The gardener was despatched on his errand, and half an hour afterward Hal sat down to supper with the banker and his family.

Mr. Marshall asked Hal many questions about himself, and his future prospects, all of which the boy answered very frankly.

The banker then hinted that it was in his power to help Hal in any way that he thought would be to his advantage.

"As you do not intend to stick to the farm you might find it to your interest to let me make an opening for you in my bank at Portland," said the gentleman, who thought in this way to partially repay the obligation he was under to his daughter's rescuer.

"Thank you, Mr. Marshall; I will consider your proposition, but I should not like to cut loose from my mother too abruptly, as she depends wholly on me to run the farm as it ought to be run. Our hired man is an old and faithful employee, it is true, and a thoroughly good farmer, but still he has his limit, and could not wrestle with many problems that I am familiar with, and which combine to put my mother's farm on the top of the heap."

It was quite dark by the time Hal got into his own clothes and said good-by to Banker Marshall and his wife and daughter, after promising to pay them a visit in the near future.

Frank accompanied him to the inn, where Hal introduced him to his sister and Fred Ticknor.

Fred and Mary had had their dinner as guests of the banker, out of compliment to Hal, and they were ready to start for home as soon as possible.

"When will you be over, Hal?" asked his new friend,



as the light wagon was brought around to the door of the inn.

"I can hardly say," replied Hal. "I'm a busy chap these days, and with the coming of summer I shall be even busier. I'm afraid it will be a couple of weeks at least before I can find the time to come out here again. In the meantime it would give me a great deal of pleasure to have you call at our farm and bring your sister. Mary here would be glad to make her acquaintance, and I feel sure the girls would like each other. Shall I expect to see you both in a few days?"

"Yes, I think you may. Things are dull here for us, as there is nobody here but the village people, whom we do not associate with. I'll bring my sister over to your place in a few days, and I thank you for the invitation."

"Don't mention it. Come any time and we will give you both a royal welcome," replied Hal, shaking hands with him and then jumping up on the front seat.

Good-by," said Frank.

The others returned the salute, and then Hal drove off homeward.

"He's a nice young fellow," remarked Fred.

"Bet your life he is, and his sister is as pretty as a picture," replied Hal, with some enthusiasm.

"Is she, and you saved her life," said his sister. "She must look upon you as a hero, especially after that reckless dive you made from the cliffs when you went to her rescue. Really, brother Hal, I am very proud of you, though you did almost frighten me out of my wits when you took that thrilling header. I was awfully afraid for the moment that you had endangered your own life for the fair stranger, but as soon as I saw you come up and strike out I knew you were able to look out for yourself, no matter if the water was rough."

"I have dived from some high places before into the ocean, but that was the longest dive I ever attempted. I never would have risked it except to save a human life, but I came out of it like a bird," replied Hal.

"Mother will be wondering why we have stayed so long away," said Mary.

"She won't worry about you, for she knows I'll look out for you."

"And I'd look out for you, too," said Fred, sneaking his arm around her waist, a liberty the young lady did not seem to object to, which encouraged Fred to let it stay where he had placed it.

It was nine o'clock when Hal drove up the lane and into the yard.

Mary ran into the house to tell her mother about Hal's daring feat at the lake, while Fred remained to help Hal unharness the horse and put her in the stable.

Jonas had attended to all the chores, so Hal had nothing to do after he put the horse in her stall, watered and fed her.

Fred saddled his mare and then started for home, well pleased with his afternoon's outing, for he had enjoyed more of Mary's society than usual.

An hour later, as Hal was preparing to turn in he happened to look out of his window in the direction of the cove, and he was surprised to see three red lights displayed from the highest point of the nearest cliff.

As he looked they went through various and unexplainable motions.

First they formed a straight line close together; then they separated; then two came together with the other apart, and finally they took the shape of a triangle, with the single light on top.

"What in thunder does all that mean?" the boy asked himself, much mystified by the singular movements of the lights.

Even as he spoke the lights vanished, and though he continued to look at the spot where the cliff was they did not reappear.

"Those lights looked like signals," thought Hal. "They must be signals. Yet, who would go to the top of a bald cliff for such a purpose, and why should he do so? The signals are evidently intended for some one out on the water—some vessel, no doubt. Well, what of it? It's none of my business. Why need I interest myself in the matter?"

Hal turned away from the window and proceeded to undress.

But he couldn't get the signals out of his mind.

Such an odd circumstance had never occurred before as long as he could remember, and he felt a strong curiosity concerning the purpose of those signals.

He went to the window several times and looked in the direction of the mouth of the cove.

He thought perhaps the signals would be shown again, but they were not.

Those three blood-red lights bothered him more than he cared to admit.

Finally he got into bed.

Hardly had he laid his head on his pillow ere he started up as if he had inadvertently touched a red-hot coal.

A thought had flashed through his brain that set his blood dancing with excitement and that thought was—smugglers!

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HAL GOES ON A NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE.

In a moment Hal sprang out of bed and began dressing himself with feverish haste.

Instead of his ordinary jacket he donned his thick pea jacket.

Five minutes later he was tiptoeing his way down the back staircase with his boots in his hand.

Every time the stairs creaked under his weight, as old stairs are apt to do, he stopped and listened, like some guilty wretch escaping from the scene of his crime.

Finally he reached and entered the kitchen.

Crossing to the door, he unbolted and unlocked it, and a moment later he stood in the silent night air, putting on his boots.

Then he crossed the yard, vaulted the fence into the field and made straight for the cliff on which he had seen the three red lights flash.

Twenty minutes before, when he had watched the lights, the night appeared to be quite clear, now he could smell the sea mist all around him.

He couldn't see it, for only the advance wisps of the fog had reached the shore, but while the stars looked bright



and cheerful over his head and behind him, not a single star was to be seen, as far up as an angle of forty-five degrees or more straight ahead of him and on the right, where the great ocean lay in solemn silence, ruffled only by a gentle breeze.

"There's a thick fog coming in," he muttered, as he strode along. "Presently the landscape hereabouts will be as thick as mud. If there's anything going on I won't be able to see it. I shall probably have my trouble for nothing."

Nevertheless, his grit urged him to go on.

It was against his very nature to give up any purpose he had formed.

He must see it through, even if it amounted to nothing.

So he kept on till he reached the foot of the cliff.

He intended to mount to the top of it, but something stopped him.

It was a sudden white glare shooting out from the mouth of the cove, a little way above the water's edge, and which pierced the thin wall of mist.

"That's another signal, or a guiding light," he thought. "I must investigate its source."

The only way to do this was to crawl out along the rocks overhanging the sea.

A hazardous journey in the darkness and incoming fog, but Hustler Hal never dreamed of hanging back.

He believed he was on the verge of an important discovery—something that had stumped the revenue sleuths of the Government.

His nerves thrilled at the possibility of accomplishing what others had failed at.

It gave a zest to his nocturnal adventure.

As he worked his way around the base of the bald cliff, a feat that could only be accomplished when the tide was out, as it was at present, the light grew brighter.

Finally he reached a point where he could see it plainly and make out just what it was.

It was a searchlight, planted somewhere up the cove, and its beams shot straight out in one direction, like the headlight of a big locomotive at rest.

Peering around a rock, Hal could see the glaring white eye looking out to sea, and he dared go no further, lest his figure be discovered by some watcher in the background.

So he waited where he was to see what would happen, for he was sure something was on the tapis.

At his feet the sea swell eddied and gurgled, like the deep breathing of some sleeping sea monster.

Around him the clammy fog closed in thicker every moment, giving a ghostly aspect to the searchlight.

Presently he heard the rattle of oars in their rowlocks.

A boat was coming in from the sea.

She was coming straight for the mouth of the cove, which was too narrow to admit any craft larger than a small sloop, and that only at high tide.

A rowboat, however, could pass in and out at any time with ease.

At length the boat appeared within the circle of the light.

It was a large whale boat, manned by six rowers, with a seventh man at the stern, tiller in hand.

It was heavily laden with light-colored cases, each strongly bound at the ends with thin iron bands.

As the boat shot into the cove, Hal caught a good view of the faces and figures of the men in her.

The six rowers possessed but a momentary interest for him.

It was different with the man at the helm.

His face and person was familiar to Hal as the stranger he had met on the shore the morning that the *La Reine des Mers* was wrecked on the beach.

Even as Hal looked at him, and sized him up as a fierce-looking Frenchman, the searchlight went out, and the boy felt as if lost in the inky darkness.

"There is no use of my staying here," he said to himself. "I must either return the way I came, or keep on into the cove. Well, here's for the cove. Fred made no mistake when he asserted that the survivor of the sloop was a smuggler. After what I've seen, there seems to be no question about the matter. This is my chance to find out who are the shore accomplices of the illicit traders, and then—well, I'm thinking somebody will be in trouble."

Hal had often walked around that point at low tide in the daylight, and he had a pretty clear idea of the route in his head.

He knew that he would soon strike a narrow patch of beach that would carry him right into the heart of the cove.

The moment he felt the yielding sand under his boots he knew exactly where he was in spite of the fog and darkness.

As he advanced he heard voices in conversation, and one of them, by its strong accent, was clearly the Frenchman's.

At last he found himself close to the spot where, under the dull glare of several lanterns, the six rowers were taking the cases out of the rowboat and carrying them off somewhere.

Hal watched the disembarkation of the cargo for a few moments, and then proceeded on, for he was anxious to find out where the cases were taken to.

With his customary nerve, he filed in behind one of the men who had a case on his shoulder.

Up an easy but narrow pathway in the cliff the man went, and Hal tracked him by the sound of his footsteps.

The boy was careful to make as little noise as possible himself.

Up and up the man and his shadower went until the top of the cliff was reached, then Hal drew closer to him for fear of losing him in the mist.

The path led inland for a short distance on a level, and then sloped downward.

The man paused several times to rest, each time putting down the case and sitting on it.

On one of these occasions he lighted his pipe, and the glow that afterward came from the bowl helped Hal to keep him in sight.

The cliff ended in a field, and across this they went like a pair of wandering spooks.

Now Hal saw the flash of lanterns ahead, and presently the outline of a barn.

Into the doorway of the barn marched the man with his burden, and Hal had spotted the receiving end of the smuggling enterprise.



He knew that this was Caleb Caulder's farm, the one adjoining his mother's on the east, so, as the men were taking the cases into Caulder's barn, it was natural that he should suspect the owner as being hand-and-glove with the liquor smugglers.

Hal, feeling safe from discovery in the fog and darkness, watched the procession of men as they came and went between the cove and the barn several times.

Behind the man bearing the last case came two others.

When they came within the dull radiance of the lanterns suspended on either side of the barn door, Hal recognized them as Caleb Caulder and the French smuggler.

That removed any lingering doubt the boy might have entertained of Caulder's connection with this smuggling business.

"Zat ees ze last, mon bon ami," Hal heard the Frenchman say. "You haf now one dozen and ze half cases of fine cognac in your barn, vich ees vat you call up to you to deespose of in ze usual vay."

"I will see to that, Captain Glorieux, don't you worry," replied Caulder, rubbing his hands together. "What I have done before I can do again."

"Yais. You are one smart man at ze beesness. Eet vas ze ver' colt day zat you get left. Eet make me burst wis ze laughter to sink how you haf pull ze vool ovaire ze eyes of ze officaire of revenue. More zen one, two time you send heem on chase wild goose, and zen when he sall be out of ze ways you disembarrass yourse'f of ze leetle cargo vich vas all ze time in ze barn right undair hees nose. Monsieur Caldaire, I take mon chapeau off to you. You are ze credit to ze trade," said the French smuggler, with animation.

Caleb Caulder chuckled as if the compliment pleased him greatly.

"You are pretty clever yourself, Captain Glorieux," he said. "You managed to land your cargo on the island in spite of the revenue cutter."

"Ah, zat cuttaire. Eet ees mon bete noire. Eef I could send heem to ze bottom eet would gif me ze grand pleasure. He cause me ze loss of my sloop—mon La Reine des Mers. I vill haf to get anozzer. Zat vill make a beeg hole in my pocket."

"That was bad, but you saved your cargo, and that is some satisfaction," remarked Caulder.

"Yais. Zat ees somes'ing. You haf now ze las' of eet in dees barn. You vill make hase, I hope, to turn heem into ze money I look for."

"Of course. I'll sell it as fast as prudence will permit."

"Ver' good. Now, Monsieur Caldaire, you haf a leetle money for me in your strong box, I sink. Ze balance on ze last cargo. Vous comprenez?"

"Oh, yes, I comprong," laughed Caulder. "If you will accompany me to the house I will show you my statement and pay you the money that is due you."

"Dat ees vat I like to hear," replied the French captain.

He turned to his six men and ordered them back to the boat, telling them that he would be with them presently, then locking arms with Caleb Caulder, the two walked off toward the farmhouse, which was only a short distance away, though it could not be seen from the barn, owing to the fog that had, by this time, grown very thick.

## CHAPTER IX.

### IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

"Well, I have made a discovery for fair to-night," thought Hal, as he watched the farmer and the smuggling captain disappear in the mist. "Who would have thought that Caleb Caulder, our neighbor, was the chief accomplice of the liquor smugglers? He is really their agent, and he disposes of the wet goods that the smugglers succeed in landing in the cove. It's a wonder that the Government sleuths never discovered his agency in the matter. It is clear that they didn't or he would have been in prison by this time. I always thought that Caleb was a pretty foxy old man, but I never suspected he'd take the chances he's doing. Well, he'll soon be up against it, for it is clearly my duty to inform the Government about what I have learned to-night. To my certain knowledge there are eighteen cases of French cognac in Caulder's barn at this moment, none of which has passed custom house inspection. There may be even more. In fact, the whole of the cargo of the wrecked smuggling sloop might be in the barn, for all I know to the contrary. If it is, it will be a great haul for the revenue people. After it is confiscated and sold I will be entitled to one-half of the amount it fetches at auction. That will pay me pretty well for the time I've put in to-night."

Satisfied that there was nothing further for him to gain by remaining where he was, and eager to get under cover out of the damp fog, Hal started for home.

Instead of crossing the fields he determined to proceed down Farmer Caulder's lane and return by way of the road.

Hardly had he gone a dozen feet before he came into collision with a bulky man, whose presence he had not detected until he was right upon him.

The man uttered an exclamation and seized Hal by the arm.

"Hello! Who are you?" he asked.

"Who are you?" returned Hal, rather taken back at the unexpected encounter.

"Answer my question first, young fellow," said the man, sharply. "You don't belong on this farm, so I want to know what you're doing here at this time of the night. We don't allow no trespassers on this property, consequently if you can't account satisfactorily for being here I shall lock you up and turn you over to the village constable in the morning."

Hal didn't care to disclose his identity for more than one reason, so the only thing that remained for him to do was to try and give the man the slip.

Accordingly, he turned quickly on his captor, struck him in the face with the flat of his hand, and, jerking his arm free, started on a run in the direction he supposed the lane lay.

The fog confused him, however, and he ran toward the farmhouse instead of the point he thought he was aiming for.

Suddenly a door opened a few feet in front of him and the light that came through it revealed his flying figure to Caleb Caulder and Captain Glorieux, who were in the act of coming out.



Taken by surprise and unable to stop in time, Hal collided with the smuggler captain.

The Frenchman was staggered but not overthrown.

He was a heavily built man, while the boy was lightweight in comparison.

"Sacre!" ejaculated the skipper. "Vat you mean by dees conduct, eh? You mos' knock my vind out. Who you s'all be, anyways?"

"Hi, hi! Hold on to the chap," shouted a voice out of the fog behind.

Hal recovered from the shock he had sustained and tried to dodge out of the skipper's reach.

Captain Glorieux, who was accustomed to deal with sudden emergencies, was too quick for him.

His iron grip closed about the boy's arm, and Hal found himself a prisoner.

At that moment the man who had first nabbed the young farmer came rushing up and seized our hero also.

"I ran against him out near the barn," he said, "and asked him to explain why he was trespassing on this place when he fetched me a crack in the face and got away. Now let's see who he is."

He and the skipper pulled their prisoner up to the door, and as the light from a lamp in the kitchen flashed upon the boy's face Caleb Caulder, with an exclamation of surprise, recognized him.

"Aha! You know heem, eh?" cried the Frenchman.

"Yes, I'm Hal Harper," replied our hero, determined to brave the matter out the best way he could.

"What brings you here at this hour of the night?" asked Caulder, feeling somewhat uneasy at his young neighbor's presence on his farm at a time when intruders were decidedly dangerous to his interests.

"I guess I've lost my way in the fog," replied the boy, that being the only excuse he could think of on the spur of the moment.

"Lost your way?" said Caulder, in a doubting tone, for it didn't seem reasonable to him that such a clever boy as Hal was known to be could get mixed up so near his home. "Where have you been?"

"I don't think it is necessary to explain where I have been," replied Hal, a bit independently. "I was trying to find my way to the road when I ran against your man."

"I asked you who you were, and what you were doing here," said Caulder's man. "Instead of answering me you slapped me in the face and cut off. Why did you do that, Hal Harper? Was it because you didn't want me to learn who you were?"

Caleb Caulder began to feel more uneasy than ever.

He didn't like the situation for a cent.

He knew that Hal had the reputation of being the smartest boy in the county, and he was afraid that his young neighbor's suspicions had been aroused concerning what was going on, and he had come over that night to make a quiet investigation.

If his surmise was correct, and the boy had seen the cases of cognac landed in the cove and then conveyed to his (Caulder's) barn, the situation was decidedly critical.

The foxy old farmer felt that he was, perhaps, facing exposure and a long term of imprisonment.

The very idea of such a thing gave him quite a shock.

What to do he hardly knew; but at any rate Hal must

be detained until he had consulted with Captain Glorieux, who was as much interested in the matter as he was himself.

The Frenchman also seemed to consider the boy's presence on the farm as suspicious, and liable to lead to complications.

"Step inside and warm yourself, Harper," said Caulder, graciously. "You must be chilled to the bone."

"Thanks for the invitation, Mr. Caulder; but I'd prefer to go right home as it must be about midnight," replied Hal, who suspected that the farmer had some object in asking him into his house.

"But I'd like you to step in. I want to talk to you."

"About what?"

"Oh, a little matter of business concerning—ahem! the boundary line between our farms," said Caleb Caulder, trying to frame up some excuse to get him in.

"What's the matter with the boundary line?"

"If you will walk into the sitting-room I will explain the matter as soon as I have dismissed my visitor," meaning the Frenchman.

"I guess the business will keep till to-morrow. I'll come over and see you at any hour you state."

"I'd rather talk it over now while you're here. It will save time."

Hal rather distrusted the "business" that Caleb wanted to see him about.

He knew that there was nothing the matter with the boundary line between his mother's property and Caleb Caulder's, therefore he didn't take any stock in the farmer's remarks, and declined to go in and talk it over at that unseemly hour of the night.

Caleb Caulder, finding that he couldn't get Hal to enter his house, was at his wit's end; but the Frenchman, who had grown very impatient as the conversation proceeded, now took a hand in the proceedings.

"You will be so good as to explain vat brought you to dees place to-night, mon garcon," he said sharply.

"What business is that of yours, monsoo? I don't recognize your right to question my movements," answered Hal, independently.

"Aha! You talk zat vays to me—me, Capitaine Glorieux?" cried the Frenchman angrily. "I sink you bettaire take car vat you say. I am not ze man to put up wis vat you s'all call back talk. Comprennez?"

"You seem to be interested a good deal in me, monsoo. As I haven't the honor of your acquaintance you will excuse me if I decline to have anything to say to you," replied Hal.

"By gar! You haf ze sheek to add une insulte to ze injury. You will apologize me or somes'ing vill happen zat you s'all not like."

"I don't see that I have said anything to you that calls for an apology, so you will have to get along without one from me. Good-night, Mr. Caulder. Send over in the morning if you want to see me about anything," said Hal, starting to move away.

"Not so fast, mon ami," said the Frenchman, gripping Hal's arm once more. "You vill not go away till I gifs ze vord."

"What's that?" cried Hal, in an aggressive tone. "I must not go till you give me permission? For unadulter-



ated nerve you certainly take the bakery. If you think I'm going to pay any attention to your orders you've got another think coming."

As he spoke Hal endeavored to shake off the Frenchman's detaining grasp.

His efforts were unsuccessful for the smuggler's grip tightened and held him like a vise.

"In ze house vis you," said the skipper, giving him a shove that sent him staggering across the threshold. "You, Smithaire," turning to Caulder's hired hand, "go to ze bote. Tell Pierre and Francois zat I vant zem. Zey vill bring une petite line wis zem. Make has'e. Allez!"

Smithers hurried away on his mission, while Captain Glorieux shut the door and gave Hal another shove which forced him into the center of the kitchen.

"Now, mon ami, I talk vis you. Take a share—seet down," and the captain gave Hal a third push that landed him in a chair beside a table on which stood the lamp.

"Say, look here, I'm not going to stand this kind of thing," cried the boy indignantly. "What in thunder do you take me for?"

"Attend to me!" cried the smuggler sharply, with a threatening look in his eye. "Now, vill you tell vat brought you to dese place dis night?"

"Didn't you hear me tell Mr. Caulder that I got mixed up in the fog?" replied Hal doggedly.

"Oui. Vat you s'all say and vat ees ze truth ees two deeferent s'ings, mon ami. You came to dese place to see vat you could find out—ees eet not so?"

"Why, what should I want to find out on Mr. Caulder's farm at night and in a thick fog?" asked Hal evasively.

"Zat ees vat I wish to know."

"I'll never tell you."

"Non? You no ansaire, eh? Make yourse'f act like ze cochon—peeg—vich nevaire go ze vays you vant heem. You s'ink you can draw de vool ovaire my eyes, eh? Aha! Mon enfant! You make une grand mistake. You find out bettaire one of dees days. You vill learn zat Capitaine Glorieux sleep wis one eye open all ze time. Zat he ees always on ze qui vive."

"Look here, what are you trying to get at? Do you expect me to stay here all night and listen to you? This isn't your house. What right have you to boss things as if you were a great mogul? What have I done to you that you should jump on me like a carload of bricks? I want to go home. If you try to keep me a prisoner against my will you'll find there'll be something doing that you won't like."

Some of Hal's expressions were as unintelligible to the French skipper as his native language was to the boy, but he understood the general meaning of Hal's outburst, and he smiled in a grim and wicked way.

He put his hand in his pocket and drew out a revolver, which he cocked.

"You see heem, mon ami?" he said, with a suggestive leer.

"I see it. Do you expect to intimidate me with it?"

"I s'ink it vill mak' you speak. Now zen, you vill ansaire, eh? You vill say vat brought you to dese place?"

"Suppose I won't say, what then?"

"We vill see. I gif you one minute to ansaire," said the smuggler, sternly. "Eef you do not I vill take eet for

ze fact zat you know too much, and zen I vill feel obliged to shoot you."

Hal looked the Frenchman squarely in the eye.

"You mean that, do you?" he said.

"Oui—yais."

"Caleb Caulder, do you stand for this kind of business?" asked Hal, turning to the farmer. "Are you going to let this rascal murder me in your house?"

"Mistaire Cauldaire has nossing to say in dese mat-taire," said the skipper. "Come, ze minute ees up. Vat brought you to dese place to-night?"

"Well," replied Hal desperately, "three red lights brought me here."

"Aha!" cried the Frenchman. "Ve are getting at ze truth at last. So you seen zem, eh?"

"I did."

"And zey excite your curiositee?"

"They did."

"Zen you mak' up your mind to look into ze mattaire. You come ovaire, escalade ze cliff and take une leetle peep into ze cove. Dere you see ze light. You s'ink zat varee funee and you vait to see vat ees on ze tapis. By and by, you see ze large bote come in ze cove wis some boxes in eet. You s'ink zat ees varee funee, too. You count one, two, t'ree, seex men take out ze box each and go way wis heem. Zen you feel zat you would like to know where ze boxes go to, so you walk after zem and you find heem out. Ees eet not so, mon ami?"

"Yes, it's so," replied Hal, doggedly, for he saw it was useless to deny the facts as outlined by the smuggler.

"Ver' good. Now zat you know dees sings vat you s'ink of doing, eh?"

Hal remained silent.

"Eet ees not hard to guess vat a smart young garcon like you makes up hees mind to do. You say to yourse'f—I haf now ze secret of ze smugglaire. I vill put ze officaire of ze revenue on to dees s'ing. He vill mak' ze prize of ze boxes, and when zey are confiscate and sold I vill get haf ze monee for giving ze information. Am I not ze good guesser, mon ami?"

Hal had to confess to himself that the Frenchman's deductions were correct.

"Now since you makes ze butt-in dees beesness eet ees necessaire dat your bouche—mouth—be keep close tight. At dees minute you s'all be my prisonaire. Eef eet please me dere ees nossing to prevent me feexing you dees way," and the skipper raised his cocked revolver significantly. "Zen you nevaire say nossing no more, and ze secret of ze smugglaire ees safe."

Captain Glorieux grinned suggestively at Hal and waited for him to say something.

The boy, however, had nothing to say.

He realized that he was in a tight box, but he was pluck to the core, and did not propose to show the white feather before the Frenchman.

So he met the captain's face unflinchingly.

"I see zat you are une brave garcon," said the smuggler, after a pause. "Eet would be a grand pity to keel you out of ze vay, so I do somes'ing else wis you."

As he spoke the door opened, and Pierre and Francois entered the room with Smithers.

The former carried a small coil of light line on his arm.



The captain turned to his two men and directed them in French to tie Hal's hands behind his back and march him down to the boat, where he would follow himself presently.

Hal didn't understand what the smuggler was saying to the two rough-looking sailors, but he knew it must have some reference to himself.

For the moment the Frenchman's attention was off his prisoner, and Hal determined to take advantage of it and try to make his escape.

It was only the ghost of a chance, but the boy was prepared to take any risk in order to get out of his desperate predicament.

If he could reach the open air he felt he could easily elude his enemies in the fog; but the captain stood between him and the kitchen door, and the two sailors also.

To escape that way was impossible.

There was another door, however, leading presumably into a hall or passage, and it was close to where he sat.

In a moment Hal made up his mind what he would do and he did it as quick as a flash.

He sprang to his feet and swept the lamp from the table with his left arm.

It struck the floor with a crash and the light blazed up for a moment and then went out.

As the Frenchman uttered a cry of surprise and raised his revolver, Hal seized the chair and slung it at him with all his might.

It hit the skipper squarely on his broad chest, and sent him staggering backward against the kitchen wall, his finger pressing the trigger of his weapon.

There was a flash and a loud report, and the momentary glare showed Hal in the act of passing through the inner doorway into the passage beyond.

## CHAPTER X.

### IN WHICH HAL TRAPS HIMSELF.

"Catch him quick! Don't let him escape!" shouted Caleb Caulder, fully alive to the complications that he would be involved in if Hal got away and forwarded the information he had obtained to the revenue people.

The burly Smithers was the first to start after the fleeing boy.

He was followed by Caulder himself, who was in a big funk.

Captain Glorieux had recovered from the shock of the impact of the chair and was swearing like a trooper in French.

"Strike ze light!" he cried. "Quick, or zat garcon vill make hees escape."

Pierre flashed a match and looked around the room for a candle.

He saw one in a candlestick standing on a shelf.

In another moment he had it lighted and its gleam revealed the wreck of the lamp on the floor and the overturned chair near where the skipper stood.

"Here you, Pierre and Francois. Bose of you get around to ze front of ze hous' and cut heem off. Allez!" cried Captain Glorieux.

The two sailors immediately dashed out of the kitchen door and started for the front of the building.

The fog was as thick as bean soup, and as there was not a breath of wind stirring it hung dank and heavy all over the landscape.

The sailors planted themselves near the front door and waited for Hal to come out.

He didn't come for he was upstairs at the back of the house at that moment.

He had rushed up the back stairs near the kitchen door, dashed into the first room he came to, which happened to be the one in which Smithers slept, and right over the kitchen.

Hal turned the key in the door to secure himself against the entrance of any of his pursuers, and then felt his way over to the window overlooking the yard.

He raised it softly and looked out.

He could see nothing but the bank of fog, but he could hear Captain Glorieux swearing in the room below.

Hal judged that he wasn't much more than fifteen feet from the ground, and it was his intention to drop out and try to find his way to the road.

"They'll never be able to find me in this fog," he said to himself. "Once I strike the road I'll get home in short order."

He got astride of the window sill.

"This isn't so much of a drop, but I'd like to know whether the way is clear or not. I wouldn't like to fall into a barrel or a box. It would mean the chance of a broken leg as well as capture."

There was no way by which he could tell what, if anything, lay underneath the window.

Suddenly an idea occurred to him which would solve the problem.

There was a bed in the room.

He would tie a couple of blankets or sheets together, secure one end in the room, and then slide down his improvised rope.

"That is just the thing," he muttered in a tone of satisfaction, and he lost no time in carrying it into effect.

While he was thus employed Caleb Caulder and his hired hand and ally in the smuggling business were searching the house for Hal.

After looking over the first floor they were satisfied that the boy had not got off through the front door, or by way of a lower window.

As Captain Glorieux was standing guard at the kitchen door, Hal couldn't have retraced his steps to any advantage, consequently they reasoned that the boy must be still in the house, somewhere upstairs.

Caulder had sent his maiden sister, who kept house for him, away on a visit overnight to their married niece, whose husband owned a farm about a mile away.

He had done this to get her out of the way when he got word from Captain Glorieux that the balance of the cargo of the wrecked sloop, which was on Chimney Island, would be sent into the cove that night if weather conditions were favorable.

After searching the main part of the house without success, looking under the beds and into all the closets, Caulder proceeded to the attic while Smithers suddenly be-thought himself of his own room, and thought he'd look there.



The moment he found the door locked he was sure Hal had taken refuge in the room.

He shouted to Caulder that he had the bird caged, and the farmer hurried down from the attic.

Hal was just getting out of the window, with a couple of knotted blankets hanging in position to make his descent easy, when he heard Smithers at the door.

"You're too late, old fellow," chuckled Hal. "By the time you get in I'll be on my way to the road."

Thus speaking he swung himself out of the window, slid down the blankets and landed—in the arms of Captain Glorieux, who was waiting for him.

The burly smuggler dragged Hal back into the kitchen and shouted to Caulder.

The farmer came in a hurry, and his eyes lighted up with satisfaction when he saw Hal in the skipper's grasp.

Pierre and Francois soon appeared, and Captain Glorieux ordered them to tie Hal's hands behind his back, and to leave enough of the line slack for one of them to hold on to.

The two sailors seized the boy and dragged his arms behind his back.

Captain Glorieux stood back with his arms folded across his breast and viewed with satisfaction the ineffectual struggle that Hal made against the two sailors.

"Aha! Mon garçon! You lose your temper at las', eh? Now you look like a shicken go to be roace for dinnaire. Bring him along wis you," to the sailors. "We have lose time too mooch. Bonne nuit, mon ami," to Caulder. "I will see you soon again, and in ze mean'v'iles I vill take goot care of dees young feylow."

He marched out into the air, followed by Pierre and Francois dragging Hal with them, and the party took up their line of march for the cove.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A HOSTAGE OF FORTUNE.

Hal felt like a lamb being led to slaughter as he unwillingly accompanied his captors across the field to the base of the cliff, and thence to the cove.

What Captain Glorieux intended to do with him he had not the least idea, except that he believed he was to be carried in the whale boat across to Chimney Island and perhaps held a prisoner there indefinitely.

They found the other four sailors seated on a big rock near the boat, impatiently awaiting the skipper's return.

They jumped up when Captain Glorieux and his party approached, and regarded the young prisoner with some surprise.

The captain ordered them into the boat.

"Now, mon ami, you vill go in ze bote, too," said the smuggler chief, giving Hal a slight push.

He stepped in last and seated himself at the tiller.

"Cast off and pull out," he cried in French, and the boat was soon shooting through the narrow opening, although its beetling sides were lost in the fog.

Hal was left to himself on one of the vacant seats between the rowers and the French skipper.

The men had a long row before them, but they got down to it with a vim, for the exercise warmed their blood and kept the chill off.

The boy thought the trip an endless one in that dreary waste of fog, which hung close to the almost pulseless ocean like a wet, impalpable blanket.

Hal noticed that Captain Glorieux consulted his watch by matchlight frequently after they had been some time on the water.

He was evidently timing the rowers so as to figure out just where he was.

He was also steering the boat by compass.

At length the skipper said something in French to the sailors and they reduced the number of strokes per minute one-half.

Ten minutes later four of the men stopped rowing, and one of them went into the bows.

After that the boat felt its way along at a slow pace.

Suddenly there was a jar and a grinding sound for a moment or two as the boat hit a shallow spot and barely slid over it.

That was hint enough that they were in the very midst of the worst part of the perilous stretch of navigation which they could not have passed over only the tide was high.

The captain seemed to know his way better after that incident, which was not repeated, and fifteen minutes afterward the boat grounded on the sandy beach of the island.

The man in the bows pushed her off, however, and she continued on parallel with the shore for a short distance, then the bowman leaped on the beach with the painter in his hand, and guided her till a narrow entrance in the rocks was reached.

It was wide enough for a large-sized sloop, or small schooner, to enter through, and led into a land-locked pool or haven, where the vessel could lie without being seen from the ocean outside.

The whaleboat soon grounded on the beach of this pool, and the trip was at an end.

"Ashore wis you, mon ami," said Captain Glorieux, brusquely, to Hal, and the boy rose from his seat and stepped out of the boat. "Zat ees right. Always obey ordaires and zen nossing happen."

"I suppose you have brought me to Chimney Island?" said Hal.

"Yais. Dees ees ze Chimney. You vill find heem all right."

"How long do you intend keeping me a prisoner here?"

"As long as eet ees necessaree."

"That's rather indefinite."

The smuggler shrugged his shoulders, and, taking Hal by the elbow, led him forward to the base of the Chimney rock.

Running his big, hairy hand up and down a certain spot, he finally located a spring, which he pressed.

A section of the rock swung inward like a door, and the captain and his prisoner passed into a dark passage.

Leaving the door open for the convenience of his men, who had the oars and other articles to bring from the boat, Captain Glorieux pushed Hal ahead of him through the passage.

After making two or three turns it ended in an underground cavern, the largest of a series of several.

The room was lighted by a kind of headlight lamp throwing a very bright light, which illuminated every corner of the place.



In the center of the room a coal fire was burning cheerfully in a large cookstove, the chimney of which went straight up through the rocky roof.

Along one side of the place was a double tier of bunks, each furnished with a mattress, a pillow and a pair of blankets.

There were ten of them in all.

Against the end wall near the stove was a rudely-built dresser supplied with crockery and glassware, while various pots and pans hung from pegs driven into crevices in the rock.

In the center of the room was a rude table, capable of seating a dozen persons, and on each side of it were benches long enough to accommodate three men each.

At the head of the table was a common chair, and this, no doubt, was used by the captain when he was on the island.

There were many other things in the room, but it is unnecessary to particularize them.

"Welcome, mon garcon, to ze quarters of ze smugglaire," said the captain, with a wicked kind of grin. "You like heem, eh?"

"I guess it doesn't make any difference whether I like it or not," replied Hal.

"Eet ees bettaire zat you like heem, zen you feel mooch more at your ease so long as eet ees necessaree zat you stay here. Tonson," said the skipper to a man, the only occupant of the room till Captain Glorieux and Hal entered, who sat on a stool, nodding before the fire, "vake youse'f up. Get ze move on."

The man, who was a Canadian named Thompson, seemed in no hurry to wake up.

The skipper shook him roughly, but he only snored and muttered something not very intelligible.

"Ah, yah, bete cochon—big peeg. You drink till you gets ze jag on. You mak' me seek," cried the captain angrily. Then turning to Hal he added: "Vat you s'ink of heem."

"I don't think much of him," replied the boy.

"He ees all to ze vat you call bon—good—when he ees sobaire; but sometime he drink too mooch for hees good, like ze present moment, zen he ees of no use whatevaire. You do not gets ze jag on yourse'f—non?"

"I never drink," replied Hal.

"Vat, nevaire?"

"Never."

"Bon garcon," replied the skipper, slapping Hal on the shoulders. "Ah, pardon me zat I keep you tied when eet ees not necessaree."

Captain Glorieux took out a knife and cut Hal's arms loose.

"Zat feels bettaire, eh? Go you now and lay yourse'f down on zat bunk in ze cornaire. Eet ees mos' four o'clock, and you haf not yet had your rest. You need not hurree to tumble out in ze morning. You vill haf nossing to do but eet and fill in ze time as bes' you can."

"Have I got to stay down here right along till you get ready to let me go?"

"Non, non. You vill haf ze run of ze island undaire ze eye of Tonson so soon as I lief; but do not s'ink zat you can mak' your escape. No vessel can come wizin a quarter of a mile of dees place. Eet ees impossible, and you vill

not swim zat deestance unless you like to drown yourse'f. Zat would be ver' foolish."

Hal made no reply.

"Go, mak' yourse'f at home in ze bunk. Eet is yours for ze present. I talk to you some ozzer time."

The skipper pushed Hal toward the bunk, and, taking the smuggler's action for a command, Hal took off his pea jacket and his boots, and turned in.

At that moment the six sailors came in and, after depositing the oars of the whale boat and other articles in a corner, drew up at the table, while one of their number brought out a jug of whisky and glasses.

Captain Glorieux joined them without ceremony, and Hal watched them until his eyes grew heavy and he sank into a sound sleep.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ON CHIMNEY ISLAND.

Hal did not wake up till the forenoon was well advanced.

The first thing he was conscious of was that he had a headache, and, as that was a rare complaint with him, he set it down to the close and stuffy atmosphere of the underground cavern, to which he was unused.

He was accustomed to plenty of fresh air at all times, and he always kept his room window open, even on the coldest winter's night.

He raised himself on his elbow and looked around.

Eight of the bunks were occupied by sleepers, and two or three of them were snoring loudly.

The bunk next his own was used by Captain Glorieux, and Hal studied his rascally countenance some moments in the dull light of the half turned down reflector lamp.

"I must see if I can't get out of this place. I'm dying for a breath of fresh air," said Hal, getting out of the bunk and pulling on his boots. "I wonder what time it is? It must be broad daylight by this time."

Walking around the cavern he found a clock suspended against one of the walls, and the hands pointed to half-past ten.

Hal, after a glance at the sleepers, walked out into the passage, and followed it till he came to the end where the door was.

He struck a match and looked to see how he could open it.

He was disappointed to find that it worked on some kind of mechanical principle that defied his efforts to open it.

"I can't get out of here till I learn how the old thing works," he said. "On the outside there appears to be a spring, the pushing of which releases it. I suppose there is a similar spring inside, but blessed if I can find it."

He gave the job up and returned to the cave, where he found Captain Glorieux up and washing his face in a pail of water.

The skipper had noticed the absence of Hal, but did not appear to be greatly concerned over it.

"Aha, mon garcon!" he exclaimed, with his customary wicked grin, as soon as he spied the boy. "You haf been out for ze morning valk before ze dejeuner—breakfas'—eh?"



"No," replied Hal, shortly. "I tried to get out but couldn't open the door."

"You could not open ze door?" answered the skipper, in a bantering tone. "Vat a pity. You vill haf to learn ze leetle secret, zen you vill know how to go and come when you like."

"I wish you'd let me out, for I've got a headache from the heat and closeness in here."

"You vash your face first and feex your hair, zen ve vill see," said the captain, standing before a glass and combing out his mustache and imperial.

When he had completed his toilet to his satisfaction, he walked over to the bunk where Thompson was sleeping, grabbed him by the arm and pulled him out with little ceremony.

"Wake up, you lazee chien—dog! Eet ees time zat you attend to ze breakfas'. Gets ze hustle on, or, by gar, I vill make you shump like ze monkey on ze hot stove."

He shook Thompson, who acted as chief cook and bottle washer of the place into wakefulness, and then pushed him toward the stove.

Thompson never said a word, but went meekly about his duties, like a man who had no particular spirit.

Hal washed up and brushed his hair.

"Come, mon ami, ve vill go out and tase ze fresh air. You vill zen feel mooch bettaire," said Captain Glorieux to Hal.

The boy followed him with alacrity.

He tried to discover how the skipper opened the door, but couldn't quite make out, though he learned in a general way where the spring was located.

Hal gulped in the cool breeze with avidity as soon as they stepped into the open air.

It was a magnificent spring morning.

The ocean around the island sparkled under the sun's rays as though set with myriads of brilliants.

The only sail in sight was a schooner running along inshore, about four miles away.

Hal turned his gaze toward the beach near the cliff entrance to the cove, for that was where his mother's farm lay.

At that distance he could see little else than the line of shore.

There was no surf that morning as the sea was comparatively calm.

Above his head loomed Chimney Rock, rising close to the water's edge.

"You would like to escalate zat chimney, mon ami," grinned Captain Glorieux, "and take ze bird's eye look from ze top, eh?"

"I guess there's no way of getting up there."

"A smart garcon like you maybe he find hees vay for ze fun of ze s'ing. Eet ees ver' dangereux, but vat you care for zat? Eef your pied—foot—sleep you take ze tumble and break your neck; but vat you care for zat? Eet ees nossing. You vill be out of ze vay for good. When you get tire of ze island you try heem," and the skipper grinned more wickedly than ever.

"I am much obliged to you for the suggestion, and will consider it," replied Hal, sarcastically.

Captain Glorieux grinned again, and then he led Hal

to where he could look down into the pool or haven where the whale boat lay.

"You nevaire know before zat dees place vas here, non?" he said.

"No. How could I when I never was on the island before?"

"None of ze people ovaire on ze shore know heem eezer, eh?"

"I never heard anyone speak about it."

"Bon. Eet ees ze secret of ze smugglaire. No one vill know zen till you tell zem; but zat vill not be till I am done wis eet."

"How long will that be?" asked Hal, a bit anxiously.

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Eet may be soon and eet may be long time. Eet all depends on how s'ings turn out wis mon bon ami, Cauld-aire. Eef ze officaire of ze revenue catch heem wis ze goods zen I vill have to shake ze beesness and mak' myse'f vat you call scarce. In zat case I let you go, mon garcon, ozzewise nit."

"May it be soon," said Hal, with some emphasis.

The captain smiled unpleasantly at the boy's remark but said nothing.

They walked around the small island, Hal examining the pair of twin rocks near the chimney with considerable interest.

They stood half a dozen feet apart, and were each shaped like half of an old-fashioned coffin.

Hal could hardly believe that they were the work of nature, so exactly did each resemble the other, and also because the inner, or straight side, faced each other, so that could they have been pushed together their resemblance to a coffin would have been complete.

The real significance of this resemblance did not strike Hal until later on, when it proved to be a very important matter.

"I s'ink ze breakfas' ees ready by zis time," said Captain Glorieux at last. "Ve vill go and eat heem."

When they got back to the cavern they found the sailors all up and looking hungrily toward the stove, whence came an appetizing odor of fried fish, veal cutlets, and coffee.

"Tonson, how ees ze breakfas'?" bawled the skipper in a sharp tone.

"All ready and waitin'," answered Thompson.

"Seet yourse'f beside me," said the captain to Hal.

Then he uttered a word in French.

As if propelled by springs, every sailor made a rush for the table.

Thompson placed a big dish of fish before the captain, just in front of a stack of plates, and then proceeded to hand around cups of coffee, beginning with the smuggler chief.

"You will haf some feesh, mon garcon? Eet is right out of ze vataire. Tonson catch heem."

Hal saw no reason why he should refuse to eat simply because he was in hard luck.

The morning air had given him a fine appetite, and the fish smelt good.

Captain Glorieux handed him a liberal allowance, then helped himself, and afterwards the men.

The fish was succeeded by the cutlets.



There were only two, intended solely for the captain himself.

It pleased him, however, to share the dish with Hal.

"You vill haf a cotelette, mon ami?" he said, shoving one on Hal's plate.

The boy did not refuse it.

The sailors seemed to regard the captain's treatment of Hal with interest.

They left the table one by one, lighted their pipes and strolled out of the cavern.

Thompson furtively watched the boy from the stove, where he stood waiting for the captain to leave the table so that he could get his own breakfast.

Hal caught his eye once or twice.

He had learned from the captain that he and Thompson were to be the sole occupants of the island after that evening until the skipper returned again.

Thompson would receive instructions to keep an eye on his movements, and he would be held responsible that the prisoner did not get away.

Hal sized the cook and general factotum up as a good-natured fellow and easy to get along with.

He thought he would have no trouble in getting away from the island if he could attract the attention of some fisherman and swim out to his boat.

It would be a long swim at the best, and only a boy of Hal's skill and endurance would chance such a thing.

Breakfast over, Hal was permitted to get out into the fresh air again, this time without the skipper as a companion, but he did not doubt that the sailors, who were smoking on the rocks in the sun, would keep a sharp eye on him.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### WHAT THE THIN POCKETBOOK CONTAINED.

The day hung heavy on Hal's hands, for he wasn't in the habit of lolling around and twiddling his thumbs.

He always found something to keep his mind occupied of a Sunday at home.

It was the day when he read his newspapers and magazines, and sometimes a book on some profitable subject with an eye to the future.

Here on the island he had absolutely nothing to do but kill time.

Dinner was served up at five o'clock, and Hal had a good appetite for it.

So had the captain and the sailors.

As soon as it began to grow dark Captain Glorieux and the six sailors began to make preparations to depart.

They intended to cross over to the cove, leave the whale boat in charge of Caleb Caulder, go on to the town of Solon and take a Washington County Railroad train for Calais, on the St. Croix River, which formed the Canadian boundary line of the province of New Brunswick.

The captain then intended to secure a new sloop and try his luck with another cargo of liquor, for the trade was profitable as long as it was not interfered with by the authorities.

At last darkness descended on the seascape and everything was ready for the departure.

"Au plaisir, mon ami" (good-by, my friend), said Cap-

tain Glorieux, stepping into the boat. "You vill make yourself at home till I return. You vill find Tonson a good feylow, but remembraire he vill sleep viz une eye open."

The smuggler favored Hal with one of his wicked grins and then gave the order to shove off.

Hal went to the rocks above the pool and sat there for some time, thinking of his home, and wondering what were the feelings of his mother and sister over his mysterious absence.

Thompson sat a short distance away, smoking and ruminating over the hard lot of a man-of-all-work in the employ of a gang of smugglers.

If he kept an eye on the boy it wasn't apparent.

Above them both the stars looked down with uncommon brightness, while the light ocean breeze swept their faces.

Finally Hal got up and walked over to his companion in exile.

"You've got orders to watch me while Captain Glorieux is away, I suppose?" he said.

"I reckon," replied Thompson, taking his pipe from his mouth and blowing out a cloud of smoke.

"What's the use of watching me? I can't get away as the case stands."

"That's right. Neither can I."

"Do you want to?" asked Hal, quickly.

"Wish I could," was the reply.

"Tired of your job here, eh?"

"I dunno. I've been in wuss places."

"But you said you wished you could get away."

"So I do—for awhile at any rate. There ain't nothin' doin' here when the skipper is away."

"Have you been here ever since this—smuggling business has been in operation?"

"I reckon I have."

"How long is that?"

"Some months."

"How many cargoes of liquor have been run?"

"Half a dozen I guess."

"When do you expect the Frenchman back?"

"Dunno. He comes when he gets ready."

"He's bound to be caught some day, and then the bunch of you will go to the penitentiary."

"I reckon," replied Thompson, blowing more tobacco smoke.

"Then I don't see what you expect to gain by sticking to the business."

"I ain't doing no smugglin'. I'm only the cook."

"You are helping the smugglers and will be punished as an accomplice."

"I don't amount to nothin'. I've got to do as the skipper says."

"That won't excuse you in a court of justice."

"What are you gettin' at?"

"Help me get away from here and I'll see that you won't get sent to prison with the skipper and the rest of the gang."

"I wouldn't dare. The skipper would shoot me."

"How could he if you got away with me? Once the revenue officers got their hands on Captain Glorieux he'd be jailed and couldn't shoot anybody."

"He'd shoot me when he got out."

"That wouldn't be for years, and long before that you



could be earning an honest living where he never would be able to spot you."

"It ain't no use talkin'. I couldn't help you if I wanted to. We haven't got a boat and no rowboats ever come over here. Any kind of larger craft can't get nearer than a quarter of a mile of the island, and only in some places when the tide is high. It ain't no use thinkin' of gettin' away."

"The captain has come to the island in a big sloop loaded with cargo. How does he do it?"

"He knows a channel that runs through the shoals."

"So I thought. The entrance to it lies to the east and north, doesn't it?"

"What makes you think so?"

"I was out fishing with a friend the other day on the edge of the shoals, and I saw the captain and another man sail away from the island in a catboat. They couldn't have done it without a perfect knowledge of a clear channel. I noted the direction they sailed, but that wouldn't enable me or anybody else to find it, for I have no doubt one must go by certain landmarks on the island—the Chimney, for instance, and possibly the twin rocks near it. The five old maids—those rocks out yonder," and Hal waved his arm in the darkness—"probably cut some figure in the matter, for I noticed he passed among them."

"You're purty smart, I guess. Say, why did the skipper bring you here? Did you find out somethin' about the landin' of them cases last night?"

"I did. I found out all about them. Then I was caught and made a prisoner of and afterward brought here to prevent me from giving the information away."

"So I thought. It was a bad thing for you. You're lucky that the skipper didn't shoot you, or toss you overboard on the way over. He must have took a fancy to you. He's a dangerous man. I'm afraid of him."

Thompson smoked on for awhile reflectively till his pipe went out, and then he suggested that they get to bed.

Hal had no objection to going to bed, although the hour was early, and so they walked down the rocks and passed into the passage, the door closing after them.

As it clanged to and shut them in the thought suddenly struck the boy that if Thompson should happen to drop dead before morning he might be buried alive, as it were, until the Frenchman came back.

Of course, such a thing wasn't likely to happen, nevertheless, the idea was not a pleasant one.

Thompson turned up the lamp, more for Hal's benefit than his own, and then proceeded to get into his bunk.

Hal didn't feel particularly sleepy, and seeing a week-old Canadian newspaper, sat at the table and began to read.

"Turn the lamp down when you're ready to turn in," said Thompson.

Hal said he would, and ten minutes later Thompson was fast asleep.

The boy read for half an hour, then threw the paper down and prepared to go to bed.

Happening to put his hand in the pocket of his pea jacket his fingers closed about the thin brown pocket-book he had picked up on the shore at the spot where Captain Glorieux had stood after hurriedly vacating the wreck

of La Reine des Mers on the approach of the revenue cutter's party.

He pulled it out and uttered a slight exclamation on beholding the article, which he had until that moment forgotten all about.

"This undoubtedly belongs to the Frenchman," he thought. "I'll take the liberty of looking into it, but from the feel and looks I guess there isn't much, if anything, in it."

Removing the wide rubber band he opened the wallet.

There was nothing in it but a soiled piece of paper, folded across.

He opened and spread it out on the table, for he saw that it contained a few lines of writing.

The writing was in English, and therefore not likely to have been the product of Captain Glorieux.

Hal uttered an exclamation as his eyes mastered the first words.

This is what he read:

*How to Reach Chimney Island at Any Stage of the Tide.*

When C bears WSW ab. 1-2 m keep 3 on p, 2 on s till Twins form coffin. Luff and get 1 on p, 3 on s, 1 da. When 1 on p bears SE tack bringing 2 on p, 2 on s, with center r ab. two p on p bow till in line with C. Haul w till C bears SW with 2 on p, 3 on s. Short tack to NW till C bears SSW. Short tack to S bringing C on sb. Tack bringing C da. Then all clear.

Then followed similar directions "To get out."

"By George!" exclaimed Hal, "if this isn't the sailing directions for the channel that no one in this neighborhood knows anything about. I guess I'm sailor enough to be able to study this thing out, and once I get the hang of it I'll be able to sail in and out through the channel as well as Captain Glorieux himself."

Thus speaking, Hal got down to business.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE IMPORTANT PACKET.

Although the directions seemed something of a puzzle on their face, Hal felt satisfied that he would soon be able to master them.

"When C bears WSW ab. 1-2 m. That's easy to begin with," he breathed. "C undoubtedly means the Chimney, and when it bears west south-west about half a mile keep three on p—three what? Two on s till Twins form coffin. P must mean port, and therefore S means starboard. Till Twins form coffin clearly means when the course of the boat brings the two rocks together so that they look like a single rock in the form of a coffin. The puzzle is, what did the writer mean by keep three on port and two on starboard?"

Hal pondered over the enigma for a good ten minutes, and then gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

"I have it. He meant the five old maids that lie to the north and east of the island. You must keep three of them on the port side, and two on the starboard till the twin rocks come together. Luff and get one of the old maids on port, three on starboard and one da. What does da mean? Why, dead ahead, of course. Say, this is easy. I'll have it all out in a minute or two."



He worked away industriously for five or six minutes, and the following was the final and satisfactory result of his efforts:

"When the Chimney bears west southwest about half a mile away, keep three old maid rocks on port side and two on starboard till the Twin rocks on the island form a coffin. Then luff and get one old maid on port, three on starboard, and one dead ahead. When one old maid on port bears southeast tack, bringing two old maids on port, two on starboard, with center one of the five about two points on the port bow till in line with Chimney. Haul wind till Chimney bears southwest with two old maids on port and three on starboard. Make short tack to northwest till Chimney bears south southwest. Another short tack to south, bringing Chimney on starboard bow. Tack, bringing Chimney dead ahead. Then all clear sailing to island."

Having mastered the way to follow the channel in, he easily figured out the directions to follow the channel from the island to the open water beyond the shoals.

He put the writing carefully away in his inner vest pocket, turned into bed and was soon asleep.

A week passed rather drearily away to Hal, and Sunday came around again without the slightest chance having presented itself for him to make his escape.

Late in the afternoon a sail was seen approaching the island from the eastward.

Hal and Thompson were seated at the base of the Chimney at the time.

They watched the sail with interest, for it struck them it might be the Frenchman back with a new sloop and another cargo.

Hal and Thompson were seated at the base of the Chimney at the time.

"It's the skipper," said Thompson, and Hal agreed with him.

The sloop threaded the dangers of the shoals without accident and finally came to anchor in the pool.

Captain Glorieux and a dapper little man in black, with red hair and a foxy face, came ashore.

The skipper took his companion into the underground cavern.

Thompson took advantage of the fact to go aboard the sloop to see his friends the sailors.

The sun sank and darkness came on.

Hal was standing in the shadow of one of the Twin rocks when the Frenchman and the dapper individual came out on the rocks and walked up to the base of the Chimney, where they stopped within earshot of our hero.

"Dese ees ze place ve vill put heem. Zere ees une petit (small) hole in ze rock vhere he vill be safe as in ze Bank of France. No one vill evaire suspect zat ze papaire vich ees of so much eemportance to ze Department of State of ze Etats Unis, and vich you haf stole from ze trunk of ze secretary of ze commission, s'all be hid in dees hole. When ze time ees ripe, and ze reward visout questions ees certain, ve vill come here and get heem, and zen ve vill divide ze monee, and zen I s'all give up ze smuggle of ze brandee and sail for La Belle France, vhere I vill leeve like ze king so long as possible," said Captain Glorieux.

"Very good, Etienne," replied the red-headed man. "Put the treaty in there and cover the hole with a stone. It

will be much safer for us than if it were in any bank. The secret service of the American Government, as well as the smartest detectives of the Dominion, are already on the job, but they will never dream that the document they are in search of is hidden on Chimney Island off the coast of Maine," and the little man rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

"Nevair—nevair in ze world," exclaimed the skipper. "Zere, go een vis you, mon oie (goose) zat vill lay ze golden oeufs (eggs)—go een and hatch zem out vholes ve wait. How mooch you s'ink ze reward vill be, mon ami?"

"Fifty thousand dollars, at least—maybe double that."

"Feefty t'ousan' dollaire! Helas! Ve s'all be vat you call vell feeixed."

"I should say so. Now let us get aboard again before any of your men get curious about our movements up here."

"Zere ees nossing to fear from zem. I haf zem broken to ze harness."

"We will return to St. John in the morning, Etienne."

"Yais; as soon as ze daylight vill give me ze bearings of ze channel."

Captain Glorieux and the little man then walked away, leaving Hal very much astonished at what he had overheard.

"Gracious!" ejaculated the boy. "So that little red-headed man has stolen a paper—a treaty, he called it—from the trunk of the secretary of some commission. This paper, it seems, is of considerable importance to our State Department, and the Frenchman and the red-headed chap expect to get at least \$50,000 for returning it. That's a more profitable game than the smuggling business—provided they can put it through. I think it's my duty to head them off, if I can, and restore that document to the secretary of the commission, or to the State Department. It is hidden in a small hole in the base of the Chimney. I must see if I can find the hole now that I've got its general location in my mind, ever though it is dark."

So Hal went to the spot where Captain Glorieux and the little red-headed man had stood talking and began looking for the hole by matchlight, the glare of which he partially shaded with his hat.

He found a number of holes, but there was nothing in them, and he was about to give up the job for the time being when his hand accidentally dislodged a white stone that lay upon a narrow shelf, and which looked as if it had fallen there.

As the stone rolled away the light of the expiring match in Hal's fingers showed him a hole running diagonally into Chimney Rock.

He put his hand into the hole and felt a thin packet that was secured by a piece of tape and a seal.

He pulled it out in a twinkling.

The packet was done up in oiled paper in a very careful manner so that if it fell into water its contents would not be wetted.

Hal put the precious packet into an inner pocket of his pea jacket, and was turning away from the Chimney when a heavy hand was suddenly laid on his shoulder, and a fierce voice hissed in his ear:

"Aha, mon garcon! I haf caught you, haf I? You haf made ze discovery of ze packeeet, and you try to play ze tiefs. You s'all be an ungrateful young rascal. But I



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feex you, by gar! Dees time I keel you. I gif you one, two minute to say ze little prayer, and zen you take ze treep to ze ozzer world."

As he spoke the French smuggler drew his revolver, cocked it and aimed it at Hal's temple.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE FEAT THAT MADE HAL FAMOUS.

Hal was staggered by the unexpected appearance of Captain Glorieux.

The smuggler chief had evidently been wide-awake that evening, had seen the slight flashes of matchlight made by Hal along the base of the Chimney, and suspecting something was wrong, had gone in a stealthy way to investigate the matter.

The result was he had caught his prisoner in the act of removing the important State document from its hiding place.

Hal had no wish to be put out of the way in a sudden and violent manner, and his desperation added strength to his arm when he turned quickly upon the skipper, pushed the revolver aside, and, tearing himself from the smuggler's grasp, dashed away into the darkness.

The captain fired his weapon after him but the bullet went wild.

Then he gave chase, with many imprecations.

The shot aroused the attention of the men aboard the sloop, and they rushed to the vessel's side to see what was the trouble.

They heard Captain Glorieux shouting and swearing at a great rate, and seemingly running after some one.

A second and third pistol shot excited them further.

They tumbled into the boat alongside the sloop and hurried ashore.

As they rushed to the top of the rocks where the excitement was going on, several of them announced their presence by shouting to the skipper in French.

Captain Glorieux, who had been unable to find any trace of Hal, joined them and ordered them to get lanterns and search for the boy who, he said, had stolen something of value belonging to him.

The men lost no time in getting lanterns from the cavern and, under the skipper's leadership, these were soon twinkling all over the small island.

Hal, in the meanwhile, had hidden himself behind a large rock at the base of the Chimney, overlooking the water.

"He's got the whole crew searching for me now with lanterns," breathed Hal, when he saw the flashing lights dancing about here and there, and heard the ejaculations of the smugglers as they flitted from spot to spot on the little island, each moment drawing closer and closer to the Chimney, where the boy had made his final stand.

At length Captain Glorieux, impatient at the non-discovery of the boy, suddenly bethought himself of the rock at the base of the Chimney behind which Hal was crouching.

He shouted to his men to close in around the base of the Chimney.



Hal heard the captain's words and saw that his enemies were closing in all around him.

He was trapped, indeed, and his fate seemed sealed.

"He'll not have the satisfaction of shooting me," Hal gritted between his teeth. "I'll take my chance in the water, for that is my only avenue of escape now, and it's a mighty slim one."

At that moment Captain Glorieux flashed a lantern around the rock and caught sight of Hal in the gloom.

"So, zere you are, mon garcon," he said, with a short, malicious laugh. "You t'ought you would mak' of your-sef scarce, eh? Hand ovaire ze packeet or I shoot you like ze dog."

"I'll hand over nothing. Come here and get it if you want it," cried Hal, desperately.

"By gar! You are une brave garcon. C'est bien domage—eet ees a great peety zat I mus' keel you, but zere ees no ozzer vays to deal vis such a slippery feylow as you who makes himsef acquainted with all ze secrets of mon business. Now, zen, say ze prayer. You haf une minute to leeve."

The captain raised his revolver as he spoke.

Hal did not wait for him to take aim, but dived head-foremost into the sea.

Captain Glorieux fired at his vanishing figure, and then shouted excitedly to his men to get a boat and chase the boy.

This, in the darkness, was like hunting for a needle in a haystack.

When Hal came to the surface he struck out for the shore, five miles away.

With strong and steady strokes he cut his way through the water, and had got nearly a mile from the island before he felt really tired.

Then he turned over on his back and floated awhile to rest his arms.

After awhile he renewed the struggle in the dark waters.

So, alternately swimming and floating, he stuck pluckily to his forlorn task until he had actually covered four miles of the way.

Another mile yet remained, and he was almost exhausted.

But he wouldn't give up until every ounce of his strength had given out.

So he kept on and covered another half mile.

Suddenly he heard the throbbing of a steamer's engine in the distance.

He saw the shining bright light from a small oncoming craft, lying low in the water, close to him.

He raised himself in the water and shouted "Help! Help!"

It was a clear, still night, and his voice reached the lookout on the steamer's bows.

Word was quickly passed aft that there was somebody in the water close by.

The steamer was stopped, a boat ordered away, and it was lowered with the precision and quickness of a man-of-war, while a searchlight was turned upon the surface of the sea in the direction whence came the cry for help.

Hal's head was made out as he feebly beat the water in his last efforts to keep himself afloat, and the boat dashed up alongside of him.

As a sailor reached over and grabbed him by the collar the boy gave a gasp and fainted dead away.

He was taken into the boat and was soon on the deck of the revenue cutter Enterprise.

When he came to his senses he found himself in a bunk stripped and the surgeon ministering to him.

In a short time he was strong enough to tell his story.

When he learned that he was aboard a revenue cutter he asked to see the commander, and that officer made his appearance.

To him Hal related his story of all he had gone through since the night he was captured in Caleb Caulder's house.

The lieutenant was astonished, particularly at the boy's great feat of swimming four miles and a half from the island, not only in the effort to escape the smugglers, but to restore the important packet, with whose loss the officer was familiar.

The revenue cutter put into Coveport at once and the officer telegraphed the facts to Washington.

Hal left the packet in his care and hurried home to his mother and sister, who received him with great joy.

Next morning every paper of note in the country printed the news of the recovery of the stolen fisheries treaty between the United States and the Dominion of Canada, and Hal Harper's name became known from one end of the country to the other.

Everybody read that he had rescued the important document from the French smuggler and his companion, the thief, and the feat of swimming a distance of nearly five miles to turn it over to the Government made Hal famous in a day.

At daylight next morning, Hal, by means of the directions he had on the paper, guided the revenue cutter close in to Chimney Island, and Captain Glorieux, his new sloop, and all hands, were captured.

At the same time another party invaded the Caulder farm and discovered some of the cases of smuggled cognac still in his barn.

That was enough to settle Caulder's goose, and he and Captain Glorieux, with his men, were, in due time, sent to the penitentiary in a bunch.

Hal received a reward of \$25,000 for his services in restoring the stolen packet, but the reputation he had acquired thereby pleased him better than the money.

To-day Hal is an important member of the community, and the husband, by the way, of Kittie Marshall, the banker's daughter, but though happy and prosperous through his hustling abilities, he never can forget the feat that made him famous.

THE END.

Read "A MAD BROKER'S SCHEME; OR, THE CORNER THAT COULDN'T BE WORKED," which will be the next number (218) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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## GOOD STORIES.

Many of the railways are arranging to employ telephones for train dispatching, the Northern Pacific having already 470 miles of telephone in service and 250 more projected, while the New York Central will have its whole route to Chicago under telephone control when 200 miles of equipment, in addition to the present 250 upon the Michigan Central, is complete.

Professor Trilbert, of the Pasteur Institute, of Paris, has demonstrated recently that burning sugar develops formic acetylene-hydrogen, one of the most powerful antiseptic gases known. Five grams of sugar (77.16 grains) were burned under a glass bell holding ten quarts. After the vapor had cooled bacilli of typhus, tuberculosis, cholera, smallpox, etc., were placed in the bell in open glass tubes, and within half an hour all the microbes were dead. If sugar is burned in a closed vessel containing putrified meat or the contents of rotten eggs, the offensive odor disappears at once. The popular faith in the disinfecting qualities of burned sugar appears, therefore, well founded.

The experiment of placing dogs on board the obsolete French warship Jena the other day before battering her with projectiles was cruel; nevertheless, the English were once guilty in a very similar case. This was in 1872 when sheep and goats were shut up in the turret of H. M. S. Glatton, which was then pounded by the Hotspur with her heavy guns. The turret was not pierced, while the animals it contained were found at the conclusion of the bombardment to be uninjured and apparently quite unconcerned. Their experience, therefore, was a pleasant one compared with that undergone by the dogs in the Jena, most of whom were either burned to death or asphyxiated, while those that escaped alive were driven mad by terror.

A monkey-eating eagle from the Philippines, the first specimen ever captured alive, has taken up residence at the London Zoological Gardens. As he sits on a stump in his large cage, blinking gray eyes at his new surroundings and with the long crest of dirty brown feathers on the top of his head ruffled as though he had been running his fingers through his hair, he looks ridiculously like a rather worried human being. He has the largest beak in the eagle house—a black, savage looking hook an inch deep. His body is dark brown, with breast feathers of a dirty cream color. His full name is Pithecophaga Jefferyi, or Jeffery's monkey-eating eagle. He was captured by means of snares set around the body of a

young pig. He will have to abandon his penchant for monkeys in favor of a diet of chickens and duck. The price to be paid for him is not yet settled, but on account of his rarity it will be a large one. Several other zoological societies have done their best to secure so rare a specimen for themselves.

A few seasons ago some of the automobilists of Washington adopted the chimes signal, consisting of a series of mellow whistles, the resultant note of which was a soft, tremulous warning chord. This musical device was generally regarded with favor. It was an infinite improvement over the aggressive "honk-honk" of the average automobile horn and added a touch of harmony to the varied noises of the street. There was no possible mistaking the presence of an automobile when one of these whistles was sounded. But for some inscrutable reason they were barred, possibly on the ground that they were whistles and not horns, a police regulation forbidding the sounding of all whistles within the city. That regulation was aimed at the locomotive blast in the interest of public peace, and it always appeared to be a stretch of the official imagination to construe it so literally as to exclude the harmonious chime whistle of the motor car.

## JOKES AND JESTS.

Child (to caller at door)—Mamma is out. Caller—Do you think she would let you come to a party on Saturday? Child (eagerly)—Oh, I'll run upstairs and ask her!

The Lady Helper at the Christmas Party—Do you think you could eat any more plum pudding, Willie? Willie—I think I could, mum, if you'd let me stand up to it.

Eva—She never had a beau in all her life. Katherine—And yet she has the nerve to declare that her face is her fortune. Eva—Gracious! It must be one of those 'unclaimed fortunes' we hear so much about.

Young Wife (reprovingly)—"My dear love, you know my dear mother can't bear cigars, and she won't remain with us a week if you smoke them in the house." Young Husband—"All right, my dear. I'll smoke a pipe."

A Washington physician was recently walking on Connecticut avenue with his five-year-old son, when they were obliged to stop at a side street to await the passing of a funeral procession. The youngster had never seen anything of the kind. His eyes widened. Pointing to the hearse, he asked, "Dad, what's that?" "That, my son," said the physician, with a grim smile, "is a mistaken diagnosis."

In the Missouri State Prison at Jefferson City are 1,761 prisoners. According to an article in The North American 395 of them are Baptists, 301 Methodists, 6 Jews, and 1 Christian Scientist. This calls to mind a story about the late Rev. Dr. John Hall. The good doctor was once walking home from preaching at a Sunday night meeting out in the country. In the moonlight he saw a man lying drunk in the gutter, and going up to him, gave him a shake. "Here," he said, "it is a shame for a nice, respectable-looking man like you to be lying in the gutter." The man opened his tipsy eyes and saw the long, black coat. "Are you a minishter?" he asked. "Yes," said Dr. Hall. "Come, get up." "Preshbyterian?" queried the inebriate. "Yes," was the answer, somewhat impatiently, "I am." "Then," said the other, "help me up; I'm a Preshbyter-ian myself."



## DENOUNCED ON HIS WEDDING EVE

By John Sherman.

Mildred Montroy was an orphan.

I had known her mother and father well, and at the death of the latter I was appointed Mildred's guardian.

Mildred was then within a year of her majority.

She was, by the consent of her parents, engaged to one Wilbur Whitting, a promising young man, also an orphan, who was completing his education in Europe.

When Mildred was twenty-one they were to be married.

I was at this time established as a private detective in New York City.

Three months before the day set for Mildred's wedding Wilbur Whitting returned home from Europe.

I had never seen him before, and I must confess that, while he was a handsome fellow, there was something in his bold and crafty glance that filled me with a vague and undefined distrust.

Mildred's conduct, after the arrival of Wilbur Whitting, puzzled me.

At first she was all smiles, and it seemed she was supremely happy, but soon a troubled expression came upon her face.

I was convinced that Mildred was the victim of a secret sorrow, and I could not but connect her affianced husband with her unhappy state, since it had developed since his return.

But I could not ask Mildred to unburden her heart to me.

One thing I could do, though—I could watch Wilbur Whitting, and I did.

I made some startling discoveries, and they amounted to this.

The affianced husband of my dear Mildred was a gambler, and, even worse, the associate of criminals.

One night I was standing in the lobby of the Hoffman House, when I saw Wilbur Whitting and two other young men enter the barroom.

I knew the companions of young Whitting.

One was Jerry Bolter, an ex-convict, and the other was a pal of the notorious Smith Whittaker, the "safe blower," or "Prince of the Gopher Men," as his associates called him.

I sauntered into the gilded saloon after the two young men and my ward's affianced.

As they stood drinking at the bar, a few words of their conversation came to my ears quite distinctly.

"To-night at eleven. Red Mike's place in the Bowery," said Whittaker.

"All right; I'll be there," answered Wilbur Whitting.

With this they separated.

Wilbur Whitting went in the direction of my residence, where Mildred had made her home since she returned from a seminary on the Hudson, where she had been educated.

I kept the two criminals under surveillance until they entered a disreputable dive saloon in the lower part of the Bowery.

When, at the appointed time, Wilbur Whitting arrived at the place and entered it I did the same.

It chanced that I had been in disguise when I saw my ward's affianced and his criminal associates enter the barroom in the Hoffman House.

I wore the same costume now, and so I feared no recognition.

Wilbur Whitting passed straight through the barroom and entered a room at its rear, which the barkeeper unlocked for him and then relocked when he had entered.

I caught sight of Bolter and Smith Whittaker in the rear room.

I longed to learn the object of this secret meeting, for I felt sure that some villainy was being plotted, but it was impossible to gain an entrance to the room.

I lounged about the saloon as long as I dared, without exposing myself to suspicion, for the place was a resort of criminals, who are very quick to spot a "fly cop," as they call the detectives.

Finally I passed out to the street.

Not twenty minutes later three men came out.

They were in disguise, but their voices betrayed them to me.

"I don't know, boys, as I ought to run the risk of detection by taking a hand in the work you have laid out for to-night, for I'm sure of a fortune with the detective's ward, and I've no call for any more of this work," said Whitting.

"That's so; but you like the cold dollars, and you'll need some of them before your wedding day," said Whittaker.

"True," assented Whitting.

"Are you sure Katholina is dead?" suddenly asked Bolter.

"Yes. Did we not have Viva's word for that before we left Europe? But why do you ask?" said Whitting.

"I could almost swear I saw the face of Katholina look out of the window of a carriage that passed me to-day. She is a revengeful woman, and if she should yet be living, she may seek to block your little game."

"I tell you she is dead," said Whitting.

With this they passed on, and I heard no more.

They took their way to a private residence on East Thirty-first street.

I crept along on the opposite side of the street.

Glancing up at the number of the house in front of which I had taken my stand, I saw the number, and consequently knew what the number of the house the criminals had halted before must be.

The house was that of a wealthy friend of mine.

I knew he kept a considerable sum of money in the safe at all times.

The burglars began to work at the lock.

It would never do to let them enter the house.

I crossed the street and blew a shrill whistle.

I was aware that I could not arrest three persons alone.

Instantly the burglars rushed from the house.

I crouched down close beside the fence.

They passed me, but the affianced of Mildred, who came last, saw me.

Quick as thought he whipped out a knife and made a leap at me.

My revolver cracked, and a bullet went crashing through the hand that grasped the knife.

Then I dashed away.

I was not pursued.

Next day I met Mildred in the library.

"Mildred," I said, "something troubles you. Will you not trust me by telling me what it is? Remember, my child, I have your best good at heart. I would fill to you the place of a father."

"I know that, dear guardian, but I can scarcely tell you, and yet—and yet, perhaps, it is better that I should, for there is a strange mystery that troubles me."

"Thanks for your confidence, Mildred."

"How shall I begin?" she said, after a moment or so of silence. "Let me see," she went on. "From the first day of Wilbur's return he puzzled me. There was something about him unlike the Wilbur I had promised to marry. Do you believe he could have changed in his nature, or could have



forgotten many little things that occurred before he went to Europe?"

"I hardly think so," I answered.

"The more I have thought of this the more troubled I have become, and now, at last, I have arrived at the startling conclusion that Wilbur Whitting is not the Wilbur Whitting to whom I was engaged before he left for Europe!"

"Not your Wilbur?" I exclaimed.

"No, no; of, there is some terrible mystery here, guardian; I loved Wilbur Whitting as he was, not as he is."

"Thank Heaven for that!" I said fervently.

Mildred looked startled as she asked:

"Why do you say that?"

The time to tell her of the discoveries I had made regarding the character of Wilbur Whitting had come, and I was glad that our conversation had led to that point.

I told Mildred all.

She was startled.

"This mystery must be cleared up; I will see Wilbur no more until all is explained. Though it breaks my heart to do so, I will tell him our engagement is at an end," Mildred said earnestly.

"No, no; you must not do that. I have a plan, which will, I trust, bring everything out right. Be guided by me. Treat Wilbur as of old; say not a word of what you have learned," I advised.

A terrible possibility had occurred to me.

I believed now that the man whom we had received as Wilbur Whitting was an impostor, and the question arose: What had become of the real Wilbur Whitting?—granting that my suspicion was correct.

Undoubtedly he was the victim of foul play.

That very day I arrested Bolter.

I had proof enough of his complicity in a daring robbery, recently committed, to send him "up the river" for ten years.

I meant to use him to help ferret out the mystery of Wilbur Whitting.

Alone with the burglar in his cell, I said:

"If you will help me in a certain matter, I'll fix it so you can turn State's evidence and get clear."

"Done," said Bolter.

This was not a case of honor among thieves.

"Do you know a woman called Katholina?"

"Yes."

"Do you think she is in the city?"

"I do."

"Describe her to me."

He did so.

"Now tell me who this woman really is."

"You won't give me away as your informant?"

"No, I will not."

"Very well; the woman is really the wife of Wilbur Whitting."

"Is Wilbur Whitting his real name?"

"There you have me. That's what he called himself when I met him in Paris. He told me he meant to get rid of his wife so as to marry a girl in New York, who was an heiress. He thinks his wife, Katholina, is dead, for he hired an assassin of the Barriers to put her out of the way before he left Paris."

This was all Bolter could tell me.

I left him, and for three weeks myself and twelve other detectives were constantly on the lookout for a woman answering Bolter's description of Whitting's wife.

It was the day before the night set for Mildred's marriage, when at last I met the woman I had searched for so long face to face on Broadway.

"Katholina," I said.

She turned quickly and said in English, with a marked French accent:

"You call my name. Who are you?"

"A friend. I can help you find your husband," I replied.

The lady was greatly agitated, but she took my arm, and I conducted her to my office, where she told me that her husband was an American, whom she had married in Paris two years previous.

She was poor but beautiful, and her husband soon tired of her and ill-treated her.

A few months before she had been assaulted and stabbed while returning from a cafe to her rooms alone.

The assassin left her for dead, but she was taken to the hospital, and finally recovered.

When she left the hospital she could for a long time find no trace of her husband, whose name was Leslie Burton, but at last she learned he had sailed for New York.

After this facts came to her knowledge, through the confession of the assassin who had attempted her murder, that convinced her Leslie Burton had plotted her death, and gone to America to marry another.

Katholina had never heard the name of Wilbur Whitting.

As she concluded the narrative, the substance of which we have given, I heard Wilbur Whitting's step on the stairs, and I placed Katholina behind a screen, telling her that I believed her husband was coming, but that she must not on any account betray herself.

We conversed for awhile on unimportant topics, and then he left.

Katholina rushed forth.

"It is he, my faithless husband, upon whom I would be revenged," she said.

"You shall be," I said.

Then we arranged a surprise for the false Wilbur Whitting.

That night, just before the time for Whitting's marriage with Mildred came, he was alone with the woman whom he meant to betray.

Suddenly the door opened, and Katholina appeared in full evening dress, as she had come to the house as one of the wedding guests.

"Leslie Burton, I denounce you as an impostor!" she cried.

Then she entered the room, and I followed her.

"What means this? I am an honest man!" cried Burton.

"You lie. The wound in your hand which you received from my pistol, proves you are a criminal," I cried.

"Curse you!" gritted the foiled villain, and he felt for a pistol.

Quick as a flash I "covered" him, and at a signal from me one of my assistants darted into the room and handcuffed him.

At that moment there came a surprise for me.

A young man, so like Burton that you could hardly tell the difference between them, rushed into the room.

"I am Wilbur Whitting!" he cried.

Mildred sprang into his arms.

The real Wilbur had come at last.

He told how he had made the acquaintance of Burton in Italy, where he had soon after been kidnapped by brigands, as he now believed, at Burton's instigation.

Burton had become his confidant, and thus learned all about Mildred.

Whitting had made his escape from the brigands, and at once set out for home.

His arrival was timely, and Mildred became his wife that very night.

As for Burton, he paid the penalty of his crime. His wronged wife secured a divorce, and eventually became the happy bride of an honest, loving husband.



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